



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday the 13th of July 2023 @ 7.30pm at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. D. Butler, Cllr. N. Carter (arrived at 19:42), Cllr. M. Dennett, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Noonan, Cllr. A. Richardson, Cllr. M. Shaw, Cllr. J. Wells.

Clerk:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

There were two members of the public present and no members of the press.

Part I

23/036 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

- The Chairman of the newly formed constituted group, Friends of Mortimer Library (FoML), attended to give an update to the Council on the purpose of the group and to formally ask for the Council's continued support. FoML will be aiming to undertake a questionnaire to establish needs of library users. The Council agreed FoML information could be included in its newsletters.
- A member of the public attended to hear the update on Garth Hall.

23/037 To receive any apologies for absence

Not needed.

23/038 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.

None.

23/039 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council of the 8th of June 2023.

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

23/040 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the Annual Meeting of the Council held on the 18th of May 2023 and other updates.

1. The rate of return on investment for TPSDF was 4.4486% as at the 31st of May 2023.
2. Email confirmation has been received from West Berkshire Council (WBC) that the invoice for rent arrears for £14,932.19 was raised in error.
3. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR): this was submitted to the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, on the 13th of June along with the other required documents.
4. The Notice of Public Rights and copies of the AGAR Sections 1 and 2 and Unaudited Declaration were posted to the website and noticeboards on the 13th of June: Annual Return 2022/23 | Stratfield-Mortimer Parish Council. The period of Public Rights commenced on Wednesday the 14th of June and ends on Tuesday the 25th of July.
5. Invoice for Rent Arrears: WBC have issued a credit note for £14,932.19 against the incorrectly raised invoice for rent arrears for use of the conservatory at Mortimer Library from April 2018 to August 2022.
6. CCTV: the planning application has been submitted but issues with the application need addressing before it can be processed.
7. Thames Valley Police "Have Your Say": An event is being planned for Mortimer on Saturday the 19th of August 10:00 – 11:30am. This is likely to be in the Fairground car park.
8. The office will be closed the week beginning the 14th of August to allow a review of the filing and other procedures. Emails will be monitored.

The report was received.

23/041 Items to be taken into private session

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

Cllr. Hill proposed agenda items 23-042 1. Planning Committee and 23/043 12. Garth Hall be taken in Part II.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

23/042 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

Minuted at Part II.

2. Finance and General Purposes

Cllr. Morsley reported each committee and working party need to review the policies that they are responsible for. A list will be distributed.

3. Roads, Footpaths and Commons

Cllr. Marsden reported on the topics explored and the decisions taken at the meeting of the Committee held on the 29th of June. Concerns regarding the Gigaclear work had been raised

and any photos should be forwarded to the Clerk. A new working party may be formed to look at the management of open spaces in the parish. Issues around congestion and parking on The Street opposite both Mortimer Lane and the Cinnamon Tree and along the verge towards Grazeley were discussed and it was agreed for this to be considered further at a future meeting of the Council.

4. Climate and Environment Working Party

Cllr. Marsden presented a written report and summarised the notes from the recent Working Party meeting which had taken place on the 6th of July.

5. Communications Working Party

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the newsletter had been distributed.

6. Garth Hall Working Party

Cllr. Dennett confirmed, at the request of the Royal British Legion, a meeting had taken place with SMPC representatives. The meeting was confidential and without prejudice and on the agreement of the Council a public statement shall be being issued shortly.

7. The Street Footway Party

Cllr. Bridgman reported that further work has now been undertaken on the stretch of The Street from the pedestrian crossing down to Pitfield Lane. Consideration needs to be given to solutions for widening the footpath from the pedestrian lights back up the hill.

Cllr. Noonan raised the issue of blocked gullies and drains along The Street which has previously been discussed with WBC. A follow up email will be sent.

23/043 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

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

A written report had been sent by the Chairman of the Steering Group but had been omitted from the meeting papers. Cllr. Carter confirmed the Steering Group had received feedback from WBC regarding a policy revision for the reserved land. WBC are required to run Regulations 14 and 16 public consultations on any policy revision. The Steering Group are holding an internal workshop on themes for the new Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Committee and Working Party Appointments

To resolve the appointment of Cllr. Richardson to the:

- a. Planning Committee.**
- b. Climate and Environment Working Party.**
- c. Garth Hall Working Party.**

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Resolved unanimously.

3. Dispensation for Precept

To consider the requests received and resolve the granting of the dispensation(s).

The Clerk confirmed that an application for a grant of a dispensation with regards to the Precept had been received from all Councillors.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Resolved unanimously.

4. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

To receive an update and consider the recommendations of the Working Party and resolve:

- a. A budget of up to £5,000 to obtain:
 - i. More detailed costings broken down into, for example, project management, detailed design, footpath, bridge, crossing, other highways work, signage.
 - ii. A new project construction plan including establishing lists of potential suppliers of the elements in i. above.
- b. To contact appropriate grant giving bodies and make applications as their time-scales dictate, once planning permission is granted.
- c. To allocate the £36,207 in the Earmarked Reserve (EMR) Sinking Fund Community Projects to the cycleway/footpath project, renaming the EMR appropriately, once planning permission is granted.
- d. To transfer the remaining cycleway/footpath CIL balance, approximately £105,000, to the new EMR once established.

Cllr. Morsley presented a written report summarising the status of the project and the next steps as recommended by the Working Party. Due to scheduled meetings, she confirmed an application to The Good Exchange for match funding would need to be submitted prior to planning permission for the cycleway/footpath being granted. The Good Exchange has indicated that the work undertaken to date on the cycleway/footpath was sufficient for an application to be made without planning permission being in place. For any application it will be necessary to provide evidence of funds the Council has allocated to the project.

Cllr. Morsley proposed that the resolution be amended to remove the words “once planning permission is granted” under b. and c.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the amended resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

5. Community Grant Fund

- a. To receive and approve the amended Community Grant Fund Policy.
- b. To resolve the next round of funding shall be advertised during September with grants being awarded at the November meeting of the full Council.

The policy was reviewed. It was agreed at 4.4 for “ask for” to be replaced with “require”

Cllr. Morsley proposed, subject to the agreed change, the policy be approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Hill

Resolved unanimously.

6. Appointment of Internal Auditor

To resolve the appointment of Mrs. C. Connell as the Council’s Internal Auditor for 2023/24.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

Resolved unanimously.

7. Mortimer Bistro Ltd

To consider the application for a premises licence and agree any comments/objections for submission.

The application was considered, and it was agreed to clarify:

- The position of the red line inside the building, which indicates the licence plan as the red line currently disappears at the bar area and at the kitchen/dish wash area.
- If it is intended for alcohol orders to be taken at the tables situated outside the front of the building as they are not currently within the red line.

8. Fairground Closed Circuit Television

To approve the CCTV Surveillance System Policy and Request for Access to Data, and the Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) as recommended by Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The documents were received.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Approved unanimously.

9. Youth Club Donated Funds Earmarked Reserve

To resolve to invite proposals from the Mortimer scout and guide groups and The Willink School for a service or facility for 14 – 18 year olds, with a view to making a donation of the funds held based on the ideas received.

A report explaining the funds was received.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Hill.

Resolved unanimously.

10. Transfer of Council Funds

To resolve the purchase of shares to the value of £24,000 in the Public Sector Deposit Fund to maintain the balance in the Unity Trust Bank Account in line with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme of £85,000.

Proposed by Cllr. Lock.

Seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Resolved unanimously.

11. Station Car Park

To receive an update and resolve:

a. To dissolve the Working Party.

b. Cllr. Geary undertakes a demand survey in 12 months' time.

Cllr. Geary confirmed the Working Party had considered options for overcoming the pre-planning conditions but, although it is currently a community project, as it will eventually become a commercial entity, it does not meet the funding conditions for the Greenham Trust. In addition, Englefield Estate would be reluctant to leave the land unused for an indeterminate number of years whilst the car park was waiting to be built.

Cllr. Geary proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

12. Garth Hall

To receive an update on the meeting with the Royal British Legion and resolve further actions as per the recommendations of the Working Party.

Minuted at Part II.

23/044 Finance

1. Accounts to the 31st of May

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 31st of May 2023 and the Balance Sheet as of that date.

The financial reports were received.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Wells.

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 3 – June 2023)	£ 4,543.31
2.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 3	£ 1,221.25
3.	AES – repairs to Fairground gates – inc. VAT	£ 558.00
4.	Parish Online – annual subscription 2023-2024 (amended with discount) – inc. VAT (Original invoice approved at FC 8 th June 2023)	£192.00

The payments were received and noted.

3. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure:

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Ref
1.	Cllr. A. Marsden – Expenses – cards, pens, tape and mince pies and mulled wine for public Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation in November 2022	£ 81.95	
2.	Claire Connell – provision of internal audit for year 2022-2023; final report and visits	£ 250.00	
3.	Tactical Facilities – dog waste bin collection May 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 294.00	
4.	Tactical Facilities – cemetery grass cut on 5 th June – inc. VAT	£ 78.78	
5.	Tactical Facilities – pillbox grass cut 13 th June – inc. VAT	£ 36.36	
6.	Alebrije Consulting – NP administration May (5.5hrs)	£ 137.50	
7.	D. Sturt – IT monitoring and support May 2023	£ 105.00	
8.	Methodist Church – Hall hire for Neighbourhood Plan meetings April 2022 to April 2023 (10 meetings)	£ 400.00	
9.	Ridge & Partners – additional planning application and portal fee – inc. VAT	£ 705.60	
10.	Oliver Signs – printing 2000x SMPC summer newsletters – inc. VAT	£ 852.25	
11.	D. Sturt – IT monitoring and support June 2023	£ 105.00	
12.	Dads Shop – red paint, paint & wire brushes, refuse bags, laminated lock (Pillbox), extra key cut, metal washer - inc. VAT	£ 64.31	
13.	Community Heartbeat Trust – 3x DS2 defib cabinets and installation – inc. VAT	£ 2,850.00	
14.	Tactical Facilities - dog bin collections June 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 235.20	
15.	L. Hannawin – Clerk's expenses – spare key for gate padlock and petrol for SMPC Custodian	£ 12.14	

16.	B&Q – angle grinder for SMPC custodian [SMPC Card]	£ 125.00	DD
17.	Amazon - 5x reams A4 paper for office [SMPC Card]	£ 27.40	DD
18.	Amazon - black LaserJet toner cartridge for office (delivery now delayed until mid-July) [SMPC Card]	£ 73.00	DD
19.	Staples - emergency black LaserJet toner cartridge for office [SMPC Card]	£ 92.00	DD
20.	Planning Company – submission of planning application for The Fairground CCTV [SMPC Card]	£ 295.00	DD
21.	Google Cloud EMEA – June 2023 cloud storage [SMPC Card]	£ 0.25	DD
22.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
23.	Smart Pension – June 2023 (Month 3)	£ 287.54	DD
24.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (June 2023) inc. VAT	£ 18.00	DD
25.	EE – SMPC mobile phones – July 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 54.71	DD
26.	BT – telephone and broadband 1.06.23-31.08.23 – inc. VAT	£ 239.58	DD
27.	SSE/OVO – Car Park Fairground – monthly electricity debit May 2023	£ 30.00	DD
28.	SSE/OVO – Plot 1 Fairground – monthly electricity 10.03.23-12.06.23 – inc 5% VAT	£ 45.96	DD
29.	SSE/OVO – Plot 2 Fairground – monthly electricity 10.03.23-12.06.23 – inc. 5% VAT	£ 159.01	DD
30.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection for June 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 95.09	DD
31.	Unity Trust Bank – cash and cheque services March-June 2023	£ 0.90	DD

It was agreed for the payment for the defibrillators to be paid from General Reserves.

Proposed for payment by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded Cllr. Hill.

Resolved with one abstention.

23/045 Items for information only

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

- a. Planning 08/06/2023
- b. Roads, Footpaths and Commons 29/06/2023
- c. Finance and General Purposes 04/07/2023

The meetings were noted.

2. District Councillor Reports

A written report was received from Dist. Cllr. Carter. In addition, he highlighted several instances where SMPC and WBC could work closely together. He confirmed the deadline for the next round of Members' Bids is the 15th of September.

3. Correspondence:

1. West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Information regarding the Government campaign to map all defibrillators on a single database. Mortimer's are already listed.

2. WBC

Confirmation that the Planning Inspectorate has agreed to an extension of time for WBC to respond to Preliminary Questions on the Local Plan Review 2022-2039.

3. WBC

Information regarding the StreetSafe survey. Deadline for responses is the 30th of July 2023.

4. WBC

Information regarding the Winter Service Plan 2023/24 - Consultation. This was considered by the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee.

5. WBC

Confirmation that a planning application for redevelopment proposals that will bring back into use the Four Houses Corner Traveller site, subject to consent is being submitted. SMPC will receive the application as part of statutory consultation and have 21 days for comment.

6. Member of Public

Message via Facebook regarding speeding on The Street. The details have been forwarded to the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) representatives. The individual is interested in volunteering to assist with the deployment of the speeding equipment.

7. Member of Public

Email regarding dangerous driving in Mortimer, particularly at school drop off and pick up times. This was reported to the Roads, Footpaths and Commons meeting and the details forwarded to NAG.

8. BALC Executive

Request seeking more volunteers to join the Executive. Circulated.

In addition, the Clerk reported correspondence had been received from:

- WBC regarding the bus consultation.
- An invitation for West Berkshire Citizens Advice Bureau AGM had been received.
- WBC are asking to be notified of potential sites that could be used for environmental projects.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the meeting extends past 21:30 if needed.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved by majority vote.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.

23/00297/RESMAJ: Land South Of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading Application for Approval of Reserved Matters for the residential development of phase 3 comprising 52 dwellings including affordable housing, public open space and associated landscaping following Outline Approval 19/00981/OUTMAJ Matters to be considered: Appearance landscaping and scale.

APPROVED – 9 June 2023

SMPC Comments: Houses - the Committee was happy with the proposed appearance of the housing within phase 3 of the development but did note that plot 63-98 was a three-storey block of six 2-bed affordable units at the top of the phase site.

Ground Surfaces – the Committee noted that there was an inconsistency with some of the details between the Hard Landscape Plan drawing [207 B dated October 2022], the Planning Layout Colour [21-1099-055 dated 3 February 2023] and Planning Site Layout Phase 3 [21-1099-005 dated 3 February 2023] where the stepped pedestrian access from between plots 82

and 83 down to the lower access road had replaced the winding footpath shown on the Hard Landscape Plan.

Retaining Walls – the Committee was concerned and had reservations with the series of proposed retaining walls edging a number of individual plots in this phase 3 and the levels as indicated in the Street Scenes and Site Section drawings. Are these changes in height between and within plots appropriate, suitable, and safe?

Particularly of note on drawing 21-1099-052 were on cross section A, the drop from plot 82 to the stepped pedestrian footway, on cross section B the drop in level of at least 5m between plot 84 (where the garage is situated at the edge of the drop) to plot 83 below it and on cross section C the difference in height between plots 100 and 109.

The Committee also noted on drawing 21-1099-053, cross section D plot 74 the narrow and split-level rear garden, as also seen on cross section E (plot 78) and F (plot 81).

No details on the various types of retaining walls are given and hence it is not possible to consider whether they are fit for purpose.

SUDs - Whilst considering this application SMPC discovered an email of 22/10/2020 from John Bowden to Michael Butler with the subject FW: Tower Gardens / MOR006 – Application 19/00981/OUTMAJ. The email concerns drainage calculations submitted by the developer. In item 5, on page 1, there is a statement:

“The swales, detention and retention basins and wetlands are noted as being under the maintenance responsibility of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council. Presumably this arrangement has come about through negotiation between the developer and SMPC, but as this is a major liability with possible engineering responsibility in the longer term, we need to be assured that SMPC with its very limited resources is fully aware of the implications of this arrangement and that appropriate commuted sums have been arranged. Conflicting with the apportionment of the maintenance responsibility of the Retention Basin to SMPC, the first paragraph of p15 of the Plan refers to the Management Company having this responsibility. Clarification is required.”

Whilst drainage is strictly not part of the current application, SMPC wishes to comment as this may be the last opportunity to do so. Drainage was considered in the related application 19/00981/ which was approved subject to considerable conditions on drainage. SMPC has not entered into any agreement for the maintenance of swales, detention and retention basins and wetlands. SMPC requires confirmation that is the case.

Additional SMPC Comments: The Committee was disappointed that the developer has not been able to reduce the height of plot 63-68 any lower than shown in its revised drawings but do note an effort has been made to address the recent comments made by West Berkshire Council and this Committee in March 2023 and, therefore, has no objections.

23/00738/HOUSE: 18 Croft Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3TS

Erection of conservatory (with glazed roof) at the rear of the property. Conservatory, 4m deep x 3.25m wide and approx 3m high.

REFUSED – 9 June 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

5. Neighbourhood Action Group report.

The minutes from the recent meeting are available on the SMPC website.

6. Health and Safety.

The Clerk reported the Spica has now been replaced and play area remedial works, identified as part of the annual RoSPA inspection, had been undertaken.

An incident had occurred on the morning of the 13th of July on the grazing area which required an ambulance and the Custodian had unlocked the gates. The Clerk will look at obtaining signs for the gates giving contact details for emergency purposes.

7. Minor Matters.

No minor matters were reported.

23/046 Communications

To identify items for communicating

A report on the speed camera sessions.

23/047 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

- Parking on The Street.
- WBC Members' Bid.

23/048 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 23/041 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

Part II**23/043 Items for Consideration and Resolution****12. Garth Hall**

To receive an update on the meeting with the Royal British Legion and resolve further actions as per the recommendations of the Working Party.

Further to the recent meeting with Royal British Legion, Cllr. Dennett gave a summary of the current situation. He reported that both parties have agreed in principle the way forward and the recommendation is for a public statement to be issued at the end of July to explain and give notice of the formal actions planned for September.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed that under delegated powers, the Clerk, in conjunction with the Garth Hall Working Party and RBL, formulates the wording for the public statement and agrees the terms of the subsequent actions needed.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

23/049 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports**8. Planning Committee**

Cllr. Butler reported:

1. Where possible, the Planning Committee is committed to supporting the members of public affected by the Birch Lane caravan site enforcement issue; a summary of their issues over time is awaited.
2. At a recent meeting, T A Fisher presented an alternative option for Phase 2b of the MOR006 development, which addresses the previous issues raised with the proposed high wall. This was considered by the Planning Committee who agreed to issue a general positive response to T A Fisher regarding the new option presented; a formal response cannot be issued until the details are seen in a new planning application.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:53

Next meeting: September the 14th 2023.