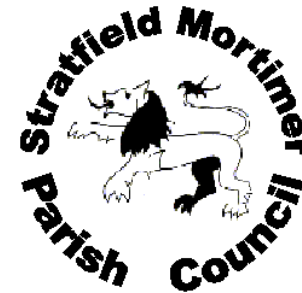




STRATFIELD MORTIMER



Parish Plan 2004



A rural parish



Vibrant social and economic life

Summary

Stratfield Mortimer will conserve its rural heritage and retain its distinctive character.

It will continue to have a thriving small business economy with a substantial commuter population.

Changes and improvements that enhance the Quality of Life of the whole community are to be encouraged.

Developments of whatever kind or scale will be in harmony with their setting and enrich the Parish.

Key Subject	Objective	Page
Crime Reduction	All Parishioners feel safe and secure as they move about the village. Promote appropriate action to reduce crime and vandalism. Have a highly valued police service. Vandalism, anti-social behaviour, burglary & car crime are key concerns.	17
Traffic Management	Implement an integrated strategy and plans that deliver a traffic environment that is safe, practical for all parishioners, and improves the environment. Speed, lorries, school run & parking are key concerns.	18
Footpaths, Cycle Tracks and Pavements	The Parish has pavements, cycle tracks and footpaths that enable pedestrians, walkers and cyclists safe and easy passage: particularly a path to the station and St Mary's school.	19
Public Transport	To have a range of public transport services that matches the changing needs of the residents, is attractive to users (cost, accessibility, goes to the right places) and responds to possible future congestion charging.	20
Housing	The housing stock of the Parish is developed in a sensitive and incremental manner safeguarding the Parish's intrinsic character. Satisfy the needs of the developing population - starter homes, affordable homes and homes suitable for the older generation. The currently defined village envelope is strictly maintained (see map on page 6).	21
Leisure Activities and Facilities	A diverse community environment that supports a thriving social life for all residents. In particular addresses the needs of the younger and older generations. The pavilion project will either be completed or discontinued.	22
Environment & Green Issues	The village is tidy and cared for, recycling more household waste and a communal composting of green waste. Wildlife is encouraged and the ecology protected.	23
Social Care	Improve the quality of life by having the necessary social and health support services available to those that need them, matching demand with the availability of quality services.	24
Communications	Residents are well informed, are encouraged to become involved in Parish Plans, volunteer groups, activities and local volunteer services, and have the means to feed back views and ideas.	25
Heart of the Parish	Develop the centre of the village making it an attractive, thriving social and economic heart of the Parish encouraging small businesses in addition to the current business and service activity.	26
Design Statement	Agree a Design Statement with West Berkshire Council that constructively and positively influences all future developments of whatever kind and scale and contributes to the achievement of the vision and the quality of life of parishioners.	27

Progress in implementing this plan will be reported to the Annual Parish Meeting held each April.

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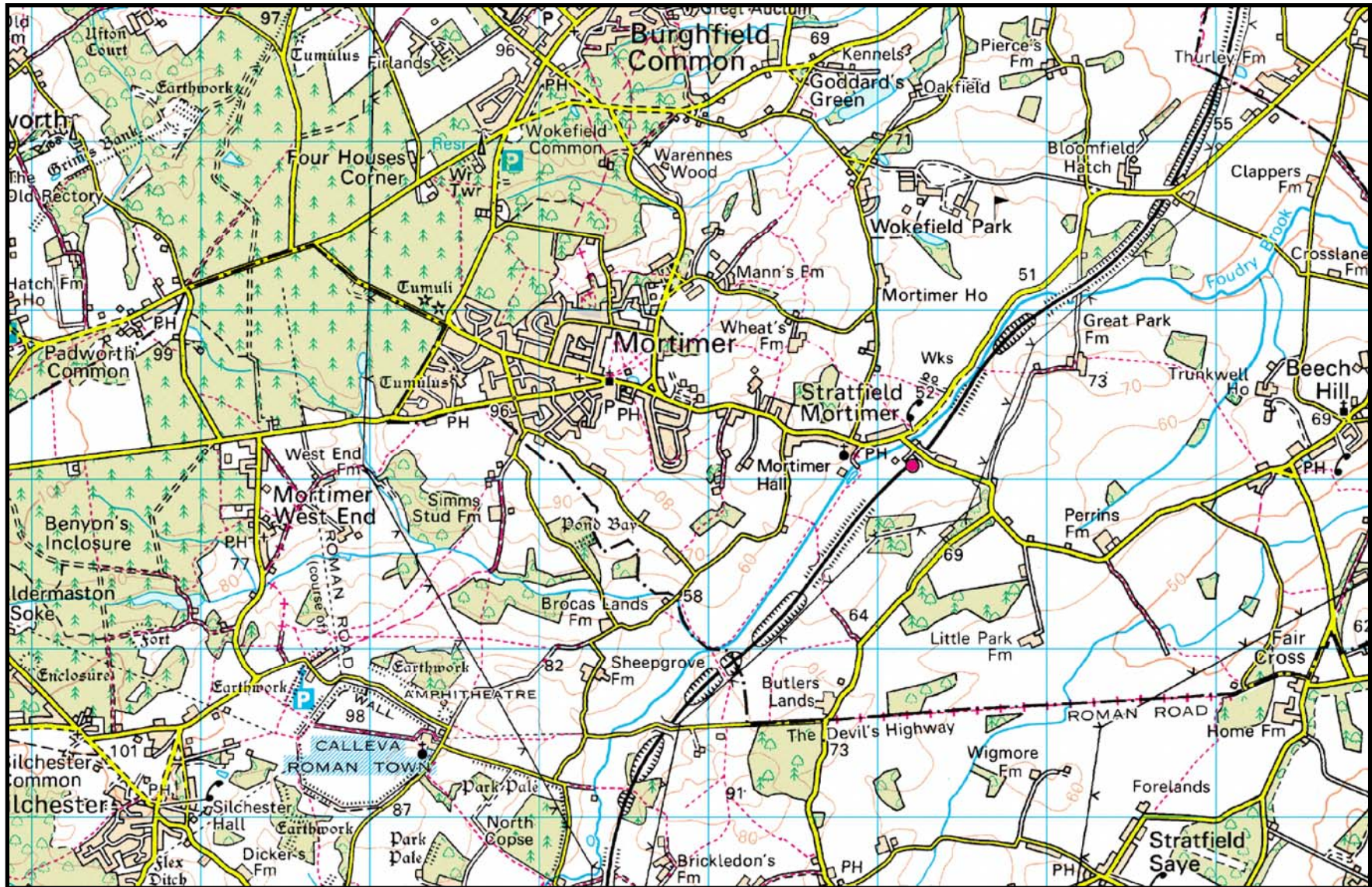
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Appendix 1 - Analysis of the Questionnaire Replies

Appendix 3 - Actions listed in Priority Order
(NOTE - Appendices bound separately)

Appendix 2 - Actions listed by Key Subject

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Map



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Introduction

The **PURPOSE** of this document is to ensure that the wishes of the community for the evolution of the Parish are the primary principle governing developments of any kind and scale. It is about ensuring that proper regard is given to the quality of design and the heritage of the Parish.

The aim is to guide and influence

- those who initiate and conduct change,
- planning policy, guidelines and decisions that affect the Parish,
- the West Berkshire Community Strategy, and
- the provision of services by West Berkshire Council and other strategic authorities such as Thames Valley Police Authority.

A realistic longer-term vision is described in this plan – including features that are valued and should be retained, desirable changes and improvements that are to be encouraged, and change that should be resisted. A plan of action is articulated to deliver that vision and to address more immediate issues and concerns.

History, shape, size, location, character, social integration and employment are some of the factors that determine the ‘Sense of Place’. This “Sense of Place” is relatively fragile and once lost almost impossible to recover. Parishes and villages outgrow themselves. The rate of change can be too quick.

Developments can be out of sympathy with the local character and a major development can substantially alter the balance of the community. Planning policies, guidelines and decisions must be mindful of the complex relationship between these factors and the feel of a community. The Parish Plan and the proposed Design Statement, once approved at all levels (Parish Council, West Berkshire), will become influential documents for managing change to conserve and enhance Stratfield Mortimer and to help avoid detrimental developments. In addition to describing the vision and a plan of action, together they will define the framework of design policies, practices and standards for all forms and scale of development.

Major stakeholders must be party to these documents - Parish Council, volunteer groups, West Berkshire Council (WBC), schools, businesses, services. Today much is going on, led by active groups, to develop the Parish. These groups need to be aware of, share in and appreciate the potential of the Parish Plan and Design Statement.

Village Developments from 1838

Background

Stratfield Mortimer is an extensive Parish pleasantly situated east-west on the southern boundary of Berkshire. It is centred between Reading to the north, Basingstoke to the south and Newbury to the west. The Parish, occupying approximately 1250 hectares, remains essentially a rural area with a high proportion actively farmed. The Parish also contains substantial woodland. The Parish is typically London clay to the east. This forms the main farming land. To the west the land rises and becomes based on gravel.

At the heart of the Parish lies the village of Mortimer built on gravel land. It occupies approximately 10% of the 1250 hectares. Close by, but distinctly separate, are a number of communities e.g. Wokefield, Beech Hill, and Burghfield. This physical separation maintains the Parish's and the village of Mortimer's discrete identity. Despite residential expansion and urban influences, which have continued since Victorian times, the village retains a rural identity and character, and the benefits of a close-knit community life.

Many rights of way and public footpaths criss-cross the Parish and the village giving easy access to the countryside. The essence of the countryside is felt right into the village with working farmland abutting main village highways.

History of Stratfield Mortimer

Early history. Human activity in Mortimer can be traced back to prehistory. Stone Age artefacts found in Mortimer include a flint hand axe. Bronze Age barrows in Holdens Firs and Stephens Firs are monuments of national importance.

The Romans were active in the area. They left a legacy of 5 roads radiating from Roman Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum); two of the roads cross Mortimer and a third, The Devil's Highway, marks much of the southern boundary of the Parish.

Mortimer appears in the Domesday Book. In 1086 Rolf de Mortimer held the manors of Stratfield Mortimer and Mortimer West End. The population, estimated to be about 300, was probably engaged in arable farming and woodland pig keeping. There was a church (near the site of the present 19th century St. Mary's) and a mill.

Mortimer remained a small agriculturally based community for many years. By the mid 19th century the population was still only about 800, many scattered in small farms and hamlets, some in squatters' cottages on former common land. The heart of the village with church, school, shops and services developed at the eastern (lower) end of The Street adjacent to the area of fertile London clay farmland and to a source of water.

1848 onwards. Change came with the arrival of the railway in 1848 which made the village accessible from Reading and Basingstoke. The Brunel broadgauge station is the only working one in the country and is a grade 2 listed building. The living and working patterns of the population were affected, as was the shape of village growth. Unable to expand to the east of the village, due to the girdle of farms, growth spread westward up The Street towards



the former common lands. The population increased from 800 to 1,200 in the last 20 years of the 19th century. Many of the red brick cottages and houses on the Common were built at that time and the heart of the village shifted towards the top of The Street. The Parish was largely self-supporting with a variety of services and employment both in and beyond its borders. Industrial workers wanting to live in a village increased the demand for housing.

Another dramatic period of growth and development occurred between 1950 and 1970 with the addition of private housing and the three large council estates of Stephen's Firs, Stephen's Close and College Piece. At the same time The Bevers was also built. Pressure for housing was fuelled by the establishment of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, and by increasing mobility due to car ownership. The population rose to almost 3,000 by 1970.

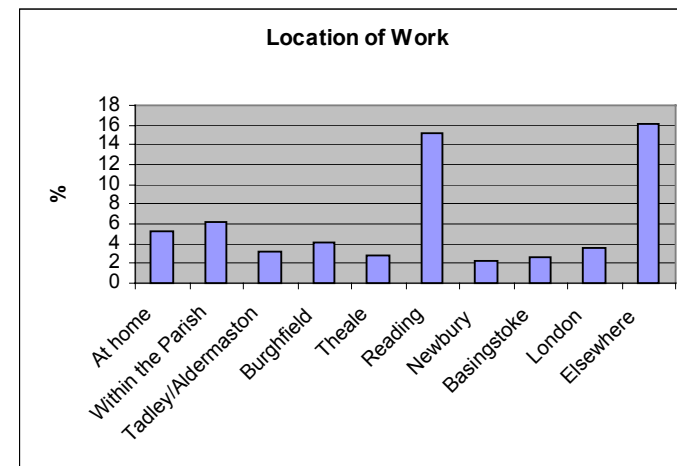
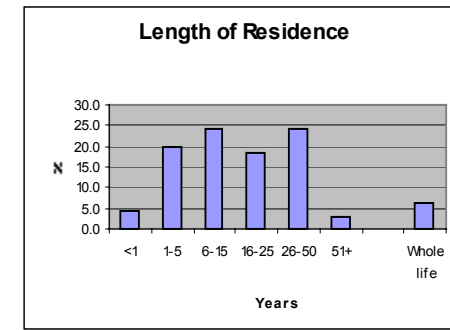
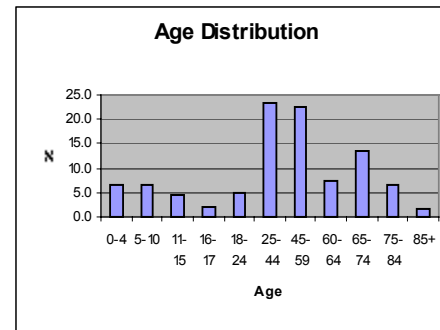
The Village of Mortimer Today

Mortimer is a linear village with most of the housing to the west. The east and north are more sparsely populated giving this area a more open rural feel. The centre of the village provides a focal point for the Parish. It is an area of great opportunity with an 8-hectare fairground, a range of shops and main features of the Parish



– the War Memorial, St John's Church and Hall, and the Methodist Church. The architecture of the majority of buildings though varied in nature, forms a pleasing distinctive visual style. Recent and planned developments are diverging from the dominant style and integrate less well visually.

The total current population is about 3,800. Building now in progress together with the planned Mortimer Hill development will add about 140 new dwellings and about 10% to the population. Age Distribution, Location of Work and Length of Residence (based on the questionnaire responses) and are shown in the histograms below.





Most of the economically active in the village commute to their places of employment. The village has a range of employment including the more traditional employment of shops, services, and light engineering (garages, garden machinery, and farm machinery) and single person businesses such as plumbers, electricians etc. The availability of Information

Technology enables the establishment of small businesses such as architects, IT firms and a growing number of homeworkers.

The station and St Mary's school are located at the far eastern end of the village. Pedestrian access, from the centre of the village, is via a narrow pavement running along side and crossing the main road (The Street). This makes it unsatisfactory for children and people wishing to make use of the rail service. Consequently there is great use of the private car to get to the school and the station. The former causes considerable congestion at school start and finish times. The station has insufficient parking for the commuter traffic.

The Parish is well served by the rail service running between Reading and Basingstoke. This service provides excellent connections to London and to destinations throughout the UK from Reading. The local roads provide reasonable access to Reading, Basingstoke and Newbury. Access to Reading (over the M4 motorway) or onto the M4 can be extremely congested at rush hours.



Technology enables the establishment of small businesses such as architects, IT firms and a growing number of homeworkers.

Process

Throughout the plan's development the emphasis was to give all Parishioners an opportunity to influence the outcome and to get involved.

- 5 Open Forums were held to which all Parishioners were invited. Attendance ranged from 60 to 180.
- A co-ordinating team, three working parties and a communications team took the development of the plan forward. Membership was open to anyone within the community.
- A questionnaire, on a range of subjects, was sent to every household; the replies formed the factually based Action Plan. 40% of households (579) returned their questionnaire representing the views of 1318 people.

The Parish Plan was launched at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2002. This was followed by the first Open Forum in July 2002 at which the views of Parishioners, their wishes and their concerns were sought. Analysis of the feedback identified three core subject areas - public transport, housing and developing the community. The second forum in September 2002 agreed the organisation for the preparation of the plan.

Newsletters were produced on progress, results and advertising future events. These were available in the larger village stores, doctors' surgery, library and post office. Key newsletters were delivered directly to households. The newsletter immediately achieved a high circulation, and was a prime medium for communication.

In January 2003 three different scenarios for the future of the Parish were put before the Parishioners. There emerged a vision of the future that was supported by an overwhelming

majority of respondents. At the same forum, by way of round table discussions, Parishioners contributed ideas on the three core subject areas

The results from the questionnaire were presented to a forum held in July 2003. At the final forum in October, the proposed Action Plan was presented. The attendees were asked for their views. These were given during the forum, in one-to-one discussions with members of the Parish Plan team or in writing.

At the end of the public process the Parish Council was presented with a proposed Action Plan for comment and at a subsequent meeting approved a final version.

Vision

Stratfield Mortimer will remain essentially a rural parish, and retain its character and sense of community.

It will

- remain visually and environmentally attractive - architecture, traffic management, public spaces etc.,
- protect and maintain the ecology - wild life, verges, public footpaths,
- have services that exceed expectations - doctors, dentists, schools, public transport, telecommunications technology, shops, and amenities,
- maintain a vibrant social and economic life,
- conserve its rural heritage, enhance its rural environment, and improve access to the countryside.

It will continue to have a large commuter population supported by good communications that respond to new needs and the effects of possible future congestion charging. Local employment will thrive exploiting advances in technology (e.g. the Internet) that favour small businesses and enable homeworking to flourish. The current more traditional economic activity of agriculture, shops, services and small engineering businesses will continue and thrive. An overwhelming majority of respondents rejected the introduction of commercial and/or industrial estates, and large businesses. Similarly the introduction of elements such as cinemas, tourism or more takeaways will be resisted.

Traffic will be managed to properly control speed, noise, pollution, quantity and parking.

There will be a strong rapport with a police service that provides, and is perceived to provide, a good service. Vandalism, anti-social behaviour, and car and property crime levels will be seen to be at low levels.

Leisure activities and facilities for young and older generations will be enhanced. Indoor facilities will be developed (e.g. pavilion) to provide attractive venues for all types of social gathering.

Services (e.g. doctors, volunteer firebrigade) and schools will continue to have high levels of investment, ensuring they are comparable with the best. Demands for social care (for the elderly, the infirm, and the disadvantaged) will be matched by quality services.

Developments of whatever kind and scale (housing, the fairground, car parks, footpaths etc.) will be in harmony with and make a positive contribution to, its character, dominant architecture, and local environment. They will achieve best design and landscaping practice, adhering to the vision they will be seen to have enriched the place and improved the quality of life of the whole community.

The village is close to having “outgrown” itself. Further rapid and/or large-scale changes run a real risk of destroying or irrevocably changing the village. The vision is of well-managed incremental change and growth – planned evolution rather than

major lurches. Pattern book housing developments and suburban styles and developments of 10 or more units will be strongly resisted. Upgrading or reusing of existing properties will be encouraged. Total growth, up to 2014, will be less than 5% of current residencies including the current and planned developments.

The heart of the Parish (the centre of Mortimer village) will be progressively upgraded to make it increasingly attractive to pedestrians, the community, small business, shops and services.

Space between Mortimer and adjoining communities will be maintained, enabling the preservation of the community's unique identity.

There will be a strong relationship and constructive dialogue with West Berkshire Council, at all levels and with all departments, and with other key authorities and bodies.

- The community will display understanding of and empathy for the Community Strategy and regional pressures.
- Planners and authorities will conduct genuine consultation and adopt the desires and wishes of the Stratfield Mortimer community.

Action Plan

Introduction

The actions outlined in the following plan reflect the wishes and priorities of the Parishioners. The percentages are derived directly from the questionnaire and represent that proportion of respondents who raised a particular issue, wanted a particular facility etc. Only those actions that received a high level of support are included. A complete list of issues, concerns and actions are given in appendix 2 by Key Action and in appendix 3 in priority order.

The actions have been collected under 11 Key Subjects.

1. Crime Reduction	2. Traffic Management	3. Footpaths, Cycle Paths & Pavements
4. Housing	5. Leisure activities & facilities	6. Environment
7. Public transport	8. Social care	9. Communications
10. Heart of the Parish	11. Design Statement	

A major wish of the community, and therefore a primary principle running throughout this Action Plan, is the desire to maintain the look, character, feel and identity of the Parish of Stratfield Mortimer and the village of Mortimer. A number of factors in combination contribute to this wish, including traffic management, the nature, style and design of developments of all kinds, the environment, rural setting, access to the countryside, vitality of economic and social activity, and maintenance of the high quality of existing services.

This plan, together with the proposed Design Statement, supported and enacted through the planning process are vitally important to ensure that the wishes of the Parishioners wishes are met.

This section concludes with an Implementation Plan

1. Crime Reduction

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

Vandalism (90%), burglary (80%) and car crime (70%) are major concerns. 61% of respondents felt that the service provided by the police was poor. There is probably a gap between the reality of crime levels and the personal perceptions of Parishioners. It would be helpful to establish and communicate the facts about crime. It is thought that unless vandalism is reduced, many other local initiatives related to public spaces and buildings would be unrealistic and a waste of effort.

OBJECTIVE

Appropriate action is taken to

- reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism, and the perception of high levels of these, and thereby ensure that all Parishioners feel safe and secure as they move about the village, and
- have a highly valued police service.

ACTIONS

1. Investigate the case for, and practicalities of having a village policeman or warden, possibly shared with nearby Parishes, and installing CCTV cameras in public areas.
2. Establish a forum for residents, police and businesses to share information, develop joint action plans and keep Parishioners in touch with actual crime statistics and initiatives.

(People identified the need for facilities for young people in relation to the reduction of disorderly behaviour; this is addressed in 6. Leisure Activities and Facilities)

2. Traffic Management

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

60% of respondents said that the school runs cause the biggest traffic problem. Vehicles parking on pavements (49%) and the speed of traffic (45%) gave cause for concern. 62% wanted a reduction in the number of large lorries coming through the village. 59% of residents wanted to reduce traffic noise and 50% wanted to reduce traffic volume. Respondents felt that the installation of speed cameras (48%) and a 20 mph speed limit (36%) in the village would make the roads and pavements safer. The provision of a continuous footpath to the station (71%) was also seen to be a worthwhile target. Restriction on lorry access was supported by 62%. There is a balance to be struck between restricting parking, the fact that parked cars have a speed calming impact, increased safety risk and enabling people to get close to shops and services. It is vitally important that an integrated traffic management strategy is developed to balance the competing demands.

OBJECTIVE

Implement an integrated strategy and plan that delivers a traffic environment that is safe, practical for all Parishioners, and improves the Parish and village environment.

ACTIONS

1. Develop, in conjunction with WBC Highways, a traffic management strategy and plan, including a professional risk analysis of the traffic hazards within the Parish.
2. Investigate what can be done to reduce the congestion caused by the school runs.
3. Look at ways of reducing speeding (e.g. Speed Indicator Device, use of speed cameras (permanent or resident operated) and pavement obstruction).
4. Investigate the benefits and possibilities of making West End Road, Stephens Road and Victoria Road a one-way system.

3. Footpaths, Cycle Paths and Pavements

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

85% of problems that Parishioners had whilst shopping were caused by obstructions on pavements. 60% of respondents said that the Parish needed to stop parking on pavements. 71% of people would like a continuous footpath to the station. 47% wanted footpath maintenance improved. 52% felt that there should be a cycle path to Willink School, 43% to St Mary's school and 47% to the station.

OBJECTIVE

The Parish has pavements, cycle tracks and footpaths that enable pedestrians, walkers and cyclists safe and easy passage.

ACTIONS

1. The Parish Council to lead a pressure group to ensure that pavements and footpaths are well maintained, are not used for parking, nor do they have any unnecessary obstructions.
2. Set up working groups, responsible to the Parish Council, that
 - have the responsibility for pursuing the justification and provision of a continuous footpath to Mortimer station, cycle paths to Willink School and Mortimer station and pavements for Hammonds Heath and St Catherine's Hill, and
 - ensuring that interested members of the community are aware of the plans, actions and progress.

4. Public Transport

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

50% of respondents wanted improved public transport. 47% of people said they would use the train more if there was a reliable mini bus service to the station and 38% if there was more station car parking. 45% of Parishioners said they would use the station mini bus service if the timetable was improved and published. 54% said they would not use the Reading bus service whatever improvements were made to the service. It is felt that, should congestion charging become a reality for Reading and other local towns, Parishioners views on this subject may change.

OBJECTIVE

To have a range of public transport services that match the changing needs of the residents, is attractive to users (cost, accessibility, goes to the right places) and responds to possible future congestion charging.

ACTIONS

1. Investigate and report on the options and available grants for improving local public transport services to Mortimer station, St Mary's School and an extension of car parking space at the station.
2. Determine how the use of public transport could be made more attractive to residents.

5. Housing

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

The types of development supported by respondents were the conversion of redundant buildings (62%), single dwellings in controlled locations (36%) and small developments of under ten homes (34%). 48% felt that the Parish needed more homes for the young, 33% more affordable or shared ownership homes, 28% additional homes for the elderly and 27% felt that there should be more family homes built. 23% did not want any further developments in the Parish.

Mortimer is likely to remain under pressure from government at national and district levels to take further major developments. Developers and/or private landholders will seek to capitalise on their assets.

OBJECTIVE

To develop the housing stock of the Parish in a sensitive and incremental manner safeguarding the Parish's intrinsic character, and provide housing to meet the needs of the developing population - starter homes, affordable homes and homes suitable for the older generation. The currently defined village envelope is strictly maintained.

ACTIONS

1. Develop a Design Statement document and get it agreed by West Berkshire Council.
2. Define a strategy so that the Parish is ready to respond to any future proposals. This should satisfy, amongst other things, the objectives outlined in the Design Statement, strike an acceptable balance between those objectives,
3. Parishioners' desires and the pressures on West Berkshire Council. Establish an active pressure group to achieve the above and to monitor developments, mounting appropriate action if the agreed strategy is ignored.
4. Document the features and characteristics of the Parish and the views of its residents and stakeholders to help in proactive planning, to strengthen inputs into the Design Statement document, the Parish Plan and its implementation.

6. Leisure Activities and Facilities

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

The need for more activities for young people was highlighted by 63% of respondents to the questionnaire. 48% of residents wanted the provision of adult education classes. 40% of respondents felt that the provision of broadband would improve the opportunities for more local employment.

OBJECTIVE

To encourage a diverse community environment that supports the creation and maintenance of thriving social activities for all generations, and provides suitable meeting spaces.

ACTIONS

1. Develop and publish guidelines for the creation and maintenance of new social activities.
2. Create a youth council to develop proposals for youth activities.
3. Set up a working group to bring the pavilion project to a conclusion - either complete or discontinue the project.
4. Fairground: establish a strategic programme to enhance the appearance of the Fairground and other local spaces, set up a wildlife conservation programme and develop an initiative to increase the use of the Fairground for the benefit of all Parishioners.

7. Environment & Green Issues

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

74% of respondents felt that the removal of litter was a very important or important issue. 69% of Parishioners wanted more recycling facilities. 50% of people wanted more litterbins

OBJECTIVE

The village is tidy and cared for, more household waste is recycled and to develop a communal composting of green waste: wild life is encouraged and the ecology protected.

ACTIONS

1. Review litter and dog litter bin facilities, positioning and emptying processes.
2. Establish a strategy to reduce litter;
 - formalise volunteer litter pick up groups, and
 - encourage businesses to take responsibility for litter outside their premises.
3. Investigate the possibility of extending current recycling and composting arrangements.

8. Social Care

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

NB Only 43% of the respondents answered this question.

Between 48% and 55% of these respondents wanted more respite care, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, a day centre and residential provision for the elderly. Just 34% of those answering this section felt that the services provided were either good or reasonable.

OBJECTIVE

To improve the quality of life by having the necessary social and health support services available to those that need them matching demand with the availability of services.

ACTIONS

1. Determine the needs within the Parish and current services available to Parishioners (this information may be available within West Berkshire Council).
2. Establish an agreed Action Plan to plug gaps in the provision of needed services.

9. Communications

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

Only 17% of respondents felt that information about what's going on in the Parish was 'good'. 67% of Parishioners rely on friends and neighbours for information, 77% use local notice boards, and 37% the Post Office. At the other end of the scale, only 4% of people used local web sites for information. Two locally produced magazines are used for local information – Mortimer Life (36%) and the Newsbell (12%).

OBJECTIVE

Residents are well informed, are encouraged to become involved in Parish Plans, volunteer groups, activities and local volunteer services, and have the means to feedback views and ideas.

ACTIONS

1. Establish a group of local editors and other interested parties, to implement the above objectives.
2. Produce a directory of local services provided by local people funded by advertising fees.
3. Develop an information and feedback service for use by Parishioners.
4. Investigate innovative – web based? – means of improving communications on local activities, exchanging ideas and information.
5. Initiate a process to improve awareness of planning issues, actions of West Berkshire Council and the District Councillors' Surgery.

10. Heart of the Parish

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS & COMMENTARY

The questionnaire demonstrated strong support for the maintenance and preservation of several major features in the Parish including St Mary's church (85%), the War Memorial (85%), the Fairground (83%), St John's Church (80%) and St John's Hall (72%). The centre of the village at the heart of the Parish is a location of great potential combining the fairground, St John's school, church and hall, the post office, the bank, village shops, Methodist church, the dental surgery and library.

OBJECTIVE

Develop the centre of the village making it an attractive, thriving social and economic heart of the Parish.

ACTIONS-

1. Establish a group to develop and implement agreed plans to deliver the objective; the group to consist of representatives from all interested parties including local businesses, school, church, trustees and the Parish community.

11. Design Statement

WHY HAVE A DESIGN STATEMENT DOCUMENT?

An agreed Design Statement is an important document that facilitates the management of all forms and scale of developments within the Parish by:

- drawing up design principles based on the local distinctive character,
- strengthening the Parish Council's and the district planning authority's position when advising on, negotiating and at appeal,
- influencing existing and future planning and development policies, and
- acting as a 'Supplementary Planning Guide' for WBC

Set within the context of a vision of how the community wants to see the Parish develops, it aims to

- ensure developments are in harmony with their setting, and
- they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the local environment.

The Design Statement would cover developments including housing, footpaths, highways, public transport, public spaces such as the fairground, car parks and so on.

OBJECTIVE

To agree a Design Statement with West Berkshire Council that

- constructively and positively influences all future developments of whatever kind and scale, and
- contributes to the achievement of the vision and the quality of life of the community.

ACTIONS

1. Establish and fund a team to develop a professionally prepared Design Statement.
2. Establish a constructive working partnership with WBC planning authorities and groups actively initiating and undertaking developments.

Implementation

Principles

1. The Parish Council will own the plan, sponsor its implementation and assume overall project leadership.
2. Volunteer groups can and must undertake many of the proposed actions. If effort is not forthcoming then expressions of interest and inclusion in the plan must be called into question. Parishioners need to be made aware of the requirement for volunteer effort and about the consequences if this is not forthcoming. Volunteers must feel wanted and that they can effect change.
3. Individual actions shall be complementary, and taken within the context of the overall vision for the Parish and the Design Statement.
4. All who have an active and legitimate interest must be involved to gain positive support for the Parish Plan and to contribute to the proposed Design Statement.
5. All actions will be assessed for their impact on the residents directly affected. Every effort shall be made to avoid taking actions that are detrimental to the quality of life of those living close by to any changes proposed. Their views and support should be of critical importance involving meaningful and genuine dialogue and consultation. A key element in attaining this aim is the adoption of and adherence to relevant best design and landscaping practice that ensures developments of whatever kind and scale are in harmony with the place and enhance the environment.

Implementation Management

The Parish Council will assume overall project leadership. Initially the Parish Council Chairman will assume the leadership role though subsequently it might be appropriate to delegate it.

Each of the key subjects will be delegated to an existing committee of the Parish Council, an existing Parish Plan team or to a newly created team.

Delegated to existing Parish committee

- “Traffic Management” and “Footpaths, Cycle Paths & Pavements” key subjects to the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee,
- “Leisure Activities and Facilities” and “Environment” to a joint team of the Fairground, Trees & Amenities/Fairground Refurbishment Committees,
- “Housing” to the Planning Committee.

The “Communications” action will be undertaken by the Parish Plan Communications Team.

New teams will be created for “Crime Reduction”, “Public Transport, “Social Care”, “Heart of the Parish” and “Development of the Design Statement”.

Funding

Financial resources are an essential prerequisite for many of the actions. Funding should be a mixture of grants, donations, active fund raising and from the precept of the Parish Council. A fund raising team will be established to locate sources of funds and be able to advise action teams on how to tap into those resources.

Prioritisation

In addition to the specific actions identified in The Action Plan, several other actions should be addressed immediately:

- Ensuring all legitimate parties and active volunteer groups are constructively involved.
- Development of the Design Statement.
- Establishing the key implementation teams and seek volunteers to carry forward the actions
- Ensuring Key Subjects are up to date as to current actions and progress.
- Establishing the fund raising team.

Preliminary prioritisation of individual actions shall be based on levels of expressed support:

- above 50%, highest priority for action
- 20-50% support, second priority, and
- Less than 20%, low priority.

NOTE these are guidelines ONLY and prioritisation confirmation must take into account a range of factors. For example maybe only 5% of respondents find wheelchair access a problem. However this could represent 100% of all people who have to use wheelchairs. In such a case clearly action should be taken to resolve the problems being encountered as a priority.

Threats to the Plan

Threats to the achievement of the Action Plan include:

1. Events overtake the plan;
2. Higher planning/approval authorities and active groups (volunteer or professional developers)
 - reject the vision and planned actions, and/or
 - ignore the agreed Design Statement and an approved version of the Parish Plan;
3. Volunteer effort and/or funding are insufficient to deliver the plan.

Joined-up Thinking

Footpaths, Cycle Paths & Pavements

- Investigate continuous footpath to Mortimer station
- Ensure pavements are well maintained
- Cycle paths to Willink School & Mortimer station
- Extension of a pavement in St Catherine's hill
- Reduce unacceptable levels of pavement obstruction

Traffic Management

- Reduce congestion of school run
- Reduce speed
- Conduct risk analysis

Public Transport

- Improve bus services.
- Extend car parking at Mortimer station

Some of the Key Subjects are long term in nature e.g. Traffic Management, and hence longer term plans are required. A number of the action points interact for example traffic management, footpath/pavement and public transport. It is important to develop integrated longer term plans in such cases.



Stratfield Mortimer is a good place to live. We hope that this Parish Plan is read and acted upon not only to keep it that way but also to continue

