



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday the 14th of September 2023 @ 7.30pm at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. M. Dennett, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Noonan, 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

23/056 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

Two members of the public attended to discuss the commemorations for D-Day 80.

23/057 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. D. Butler, Cllr. N. Carter and Cllr. A. Richardson.

23/058 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.

23/059 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of the 17th of August 2023.

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

23/060 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the Meeting of the Council held on the 13th of July 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 17th of August 2023 and other updates.

1. Bank Reconciliation and Internal Financial Control: these have been undertaken for the period 1st of April – 30th of June and reported to the Finances and General Purposes Committee on the 5th of September. No issues were highlighted.
2. The Public Sector Deposit Fund Return of Investment: As noted at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on the 5th of September, the return on investment as at the 30th of June 2023 was 4.79%. As at the 31st of March 2023 it was 4.1223%.
3. Co-option: no applications for the current vacancy have been received by the publicised date of the 1st of September.
4. Scarecrow Trail: Mortimer Village Partnership have requested that portable toilets are once again housed in the Fairground car park. This will be for the half term week – 21st – 29th of October. The toilets will be collected on Monday the 30th of October.
5. Windmill Common boundary: as per the Approved Settlement Agreement, the resident has removed the stone from outside the margin of the track and turning area and restored the fence on the western boundary to the correct boundary line.
6. Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS): Confirmation has been provided to Unity Trust regarding the Council's eligibility under FSCS which includes small local authorities with an annual budget of up to EUR 500,000 (£430,065* as at 03/07/2023).
7. Mid-Term Internal Audit: this has been booked for the 19th of October.

In addition, the Clerk reported:

- purchase of shares in the Public Sector Deposit Fund to the value of £24,000 to maintain the balance in the Unity Trust Bank Account in line with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme of £85,000, as agreed at the meeting held on the 13th of July, had not gone ahead due to the fact that the balance in the Unity Trust Bank account had dropped to below £85,000.
- The Clerk had attended an Officers Update and will circulate any relevant information once received in electronic format.

The report was received.

23/061 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 agenda item 23/062 5. Garth Hall Working Party and Cllr. Bridgman proposed agenda item 23-062 1. Planning Committee be taken in Part II.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Morsley moved agenda item 23/063 5. D-Day 80 to be discussed next.

23/062 Items for Consideration and Resolution

5. D-Day 80

To review the information received and consider and agree the Council's role in commemorating the event on the 6th of June 2024.

Cllr. Hill reported that parties, including the members of the public in attendance, had been looking to put on an event similar to that held for the Platinum Jubilee and a potential date was the 25th of June. The members of the public confirmed that they would be willing to forgo their event and join in with any alternative D-Day commemorations planned by the Council. A discussion ensued looking at the various options.

Further to the discussion, Cllr. Morsley proposed the Council participates with the national beacon commemoration, and additional relevant activities such as military music and the Last Post, on the 6th of June 2024.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

The members of the public will approach other bodies and seek an understanding as to what events they may like to provide, if any, on other evenings/days with a view to producing a joint programme of events.

23/063 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

Cllr. Morsley confirmed the Committee meeting planned for the 14th of September had been cancelled as the site notice had not yet been displayed for the one application received. An extension for the deadline for comments has been sought.

Also Minuted at Part II.

2. Finance and General Purposes

Cllr. Morsley reported updated policies will be on the agenda for the Council's October meeting.

3. Climate and Environment Working Party

Cllr. Marsden confirmed a date is being set for the next meeting.

4. Communications Working Party

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the date for articles for the next newsletter is the 22nd of September.

5. Garth Hall Working Party

Cllr. Dennett confirmed a further meeting had taken place with RBL and SMPC representatives. The meeting was confidential and without prejudice and the wording of the Public Statement, Public Notice and timetable were agreed. The Public Statement has been issued.

Also Minuted at Part II.

6. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath Working Party

Cllr. Morsley confirmed a case officer has been allocated to the planning application and a site visit had taken place with the case officer, SMPC representatives and Ridge & Partners LLP. Comments from technical consultees on the application have been made.

7. The Street Footway Working Party

Cllr. Morsley confirmed the vegetation along the footway by Abbey Croft is overgrown.

23/064 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

To resolve:

- a. the terms of Review of Reserved Land, as set out in 10.2.1 paragraph 3 of the NDP, have been met in full.
- b. the use of the Reserved Land on the MOR006 site be modified to provide
 - I. An outdoor play space for St John's School with staff car parking
 - II. A new dental practice for Oaktree Dental Surgery
 - III. Reserve space for a possible medical surgery in the future
 - IV. 20 new homes reserved for Senior residents (over 55 / 65 TBA)
- c. This plan will be achieved through the combination of the reserved 1ha of land specified in the current Neighbourhood Plan and the site known as Redwood. This site will be purchased by TA Fisher.
- d. To progress this change through a Planning Application submitted by TA Fisher.

Cllr. Bridgman presented a written report and explained that the purpose of the proposed resolution was to seek the Council's formal acknowledgement that the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) DP has been reviewed and the Council approved the modification to the use of the Reserved Land i.e. the "preferred option" as described in the report.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved with two abstentions.

Cllr. Morsley thanked those people who had been working on the review.

2. Friends of Mortimer Library

To appoint up to two Council representatives to the Executive Committee.

Cllr. Morsley proposed Cllr. Lock and Mr. C. Lewis as the Council representatives.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

3. Projector

To resolve to purchase a new projector at a cost of up to £750.00.

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the idea was to buy a smaller, lighter projector with Wi-Fi. The current one could be sold or donated.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

4. Members' Bid

To resolve to seek the support of the District Councillors and Members' Bid to upgrade the water supply to the grazing area.

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the idea was to make water more accessible to those using/hiring the Fairground and grazing area. A pipe would be laid underground from the current supply to a standpipe in a lockable box in the conservation area with an extended supply to a tap in the compound. Two quotes have been received and the estimated cost is £7,500. 50% of this would be covered by the Members' Bid if successful.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed that the Council puts in a request for a Members' Bid of up to £4,000.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

Resolved unanimously.

5. D-Day 80

To review the information received and consider and agree the Council's role in commemorating the event on the 6th of June 2024.

Minuted above.

6. Youth Club Donated Funds Earmarked Reserve

To consider the proposals received for appropriate projects and resolve the allocation of funds.

The only proposal received was one from Mortimer Scouts who had written saying they would use the money towards their 2024 cycle tour of Normandy, which is planned to coincide with the 80th year since the D Day landings. Most Scouts participating are in the 14 – 18 age group. Cllr. Morsley proposed the money be given to the Scouts for the cycle tour.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

7. External Audit

To receive the report for 2022/23.

The external audit report was received.

Cllr. Bridgman congratulated the Clerk on the work undertaken.

8. Budget 2024/25

To receive confirmation of the approach and timetable for the preparation of the 2024/25 budget as agreed by Finance and General Purposes.

The plans for the Budget 2024/25 were received.

9. Christmas Function 2023

To consider and resolve to:

- a. Part pay the cost of the 2023 Christmas function to recognise the contribution to the life of the parish that parish councillors make without financial reward.**

Further to a discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

- b. Part pay the cost of the Christmas function for three employees as guests of the Council.**

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

23/065 Finance**1. Accounts to the 31st of July 2023**

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

Proposed by Cllr. Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Approved unanimously.

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

To receive and note summary of payments.

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Payment Ref
			824485741
1. Salaries (Month 4 – July 2023)		£ 4,543.31	783304435
			815423091
2. HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 4		£ 1,221.25	149314236

3.	Salaries (Month 5 – August 2023)	£ 4,351.30	646398561 697595939 453735547
4.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 5	£ 1,189.98	358488143
5.	WBC – 3x Quarter rent for office space 25.12.22 to 28.09.2023	£ 2,625.00	62961914
6.	Tactical Facilities – July cemetery and pillbox grass cut and trim – inc. VAT	£ 115.14	508369309
7.	Tactical Facilities – July dog waste bin collections – inc. VAT	£ 294.00	368846067
8.	St John's Hall – Booking for B&M NAG meeting 27 Sept 2023	£ 24.00	321030337
9.	Dads Shop – Pliers, metal washers, cutting disc and strong tie refuse bags – inc. VAT	£ 45.91	709626374
10.	Rialtas – annual software support and maintenance licence June 2023-June 2024 – inc. VAT	£ 179.47	877789665
11.	Rialtas – annual subscription for digital VAT submissions June 2023-2024 – inc. VAT	£97.13	39913530
12.	VitaPlay – supply and install surface repairs around slide – inc. VAT	£ 540.00	354693923
13.	VitaPlay – supply and install surface repairs for Proludic Hip Hop and repair grass matting – inc. VAT	£ 828.00	62730715
14.	VitaPlay – supply and install replacement bearing for Kompan Spica – inc. VAT	£ 2,234.40	648250375
15.	Sunshine Commercial – Fairground grounds maintenance June 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 384.14	394500603
16.	Sunshine Commercial – Fairground grounds maintenance July 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 384.14	
17.	Volunteer Centre West Berkshire – advice session 28.06.2023	£ 15.00	13418429
18.	Alebrije Consulting – NP admin assistant 7 hours June 2023	£ 175.00	524165185
19.	Alebrije Consulting – NP admin assistant 10.5 hours July 2023	£ 262.50	263150055
20.	Wicksteed – extra grease nipples for outdoor gym equipment – inc. VAT	£ 26.04	792137809
21.	G. Bridgman – Cllr. Expenses incurred for meeting with Greenham Trust – mileage (24 miles)	£ 10.80	751945793
22.	G. Bridgman – Cllr. Expenses incurred for meeting with Greenham Trust – 3x coffee	£ 8.95	
23.	D.C. Sturt – IT support and monitoring July 2023	£ 105.00	83062054
24.	CCB – annual membership renewal 2023-2024 (<i>approved under item 22/131.7 as part of the Continuous Payments</i>)	£ 42.00	384110496
25.	Aldermaston Signs – metal emergency signs for grazing area gates - inc. VAT	£ 72.24	820416520
26.	Google Cloud EMEA – July 2023 cloud storage [SMPC Card]	£ 0.25	DD
27.	Openstrike – 2 year domain management (stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk) [SMPC Card]	£ 100.00	DD
28.	Amazon – A1 Flipchart pad for Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 9.99	DD
29.	Amazon – marker pens and Post It Notes for NP Steering Group – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£13.81	DD
30.	Grabloader – top soil for The Fairground – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 72.00	DD
31.	Post Office – first class mail to CCLA [SMPC Card]	£ 2.25	DD

32.	GrowingGame – LTA Safety & Protection course for assistant to Clerk [SMPC Card]	£ 30.00	DD
33.	KPCM – 2x No Dogs aluminium signs – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 42.12	DD
34.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
35.	Smart Pension – July 2023 (Month 4)	£ 296.38	DD
36.	Smart Pension – August 2023 (Month 5)	£ 284.60	DD
37.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (July 2023) inc. VAT	£ 18.00	DD
38.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection July 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 93.86	DD
39.	EE – SMPC mobile phones and 5G wifi – August 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 42.00	DD
40.	OVO Energy – Fairground Car Park electricity – July – inc. VAT (Account currently in credit)	£ 19.82	DD
41.	Castle Water – Fairground water June – November 2023 (Account currently in credit)	-£242.90	In credit

The payments were received and noted.

3. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure:

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Payment Ref
1.	PKF Littlejohn – limited assurance review of AGAR 31.03.2023 – inc. VAT	£ 756.00	
2.	Englefield Estate – cemetery rent Q4 2023	£ 62.50	
3.	Alebrije Consulting – NP admin assistant August (5hrs)	£ 125.00	
4.	Dads Shop – Refuse bags x40, wire brush, M6 screw set and nut, M6 Hex nut, 75mm wire, Carlube grease – inc VAT	£ 26.31	
5.	Tactical Facilities – cemetery grounds maintenance 28/08/2023 – inc. VAT	£78.78	
6.	Cllr. M. Dennett expenses – counters for ASWC deployments.	£11.49	
7.	Allen Dadswell – cycleway/footpath costs – inc. VAT	£2,400	
8.	Tactical Facilities – dog waste empties August – inc. VAT	£235.20	
9.	The Payroll Site – annual small employer fee 2023-2024 – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 93.60	DD
10.	Office Furniture Online – Ergonomic office desk for office – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 425.26	DD
11.	Amazon – File dividers – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 8.99	DD
12.	Glasdon – refuse bags – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£115.37	
13.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
14.	Google Cloud EMEA – monthly cloud storage [SMPC Card]	£ 0.29	DD
15.	SSE – Grazing Area electricity – monthly DD	£49.00	DD
16.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (August 2023) inc. VAT	£ 18.00	DD
17.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection August 2023 – inc. VAT	£117.83	DD
18.	EE – SMPC mobile phones and 5G wifi – xxx 2023 – inc. VAT	£42.00	DD
19.	OVO Energy – Fairground Car Park electricity 3.8.2023-2.9.2023 – inc. VAT (Account currently in credit)	£6.00	DD
20.	Fairground Trust – annual rent.	£2701.00	SO

It was agreed for the payment for the defibrillators to be paid from General Reserves.
Proposed for payment by Cllr. Morsley.
Seconded Cllr. Bridgman.
Resolved with one abstention.

23/066 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 27/07/2023**
 - b. Planning 24/08/2023**
 - c. Finance and General Purposes 05/09/2023**
- The meetings were noted, and minutes received.

2. District Councillor Reports

A written report was received from Dist. Cllr. Carter.

3. Correspondence:

1. Smart Pension

Notification that the monthly pension administration fee is increasing from £15.00 + VAT to £22.00 + VAT as of the 1st of October.

2. West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Notification of and an invitation to comment on West Berkshire's consultation on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) which runs from the 31st of August to the 23rd of November.

3. Members of Public

Two complaints have been received regarding Gigaclear and the poor reinstatement to surfaces following installation works. One resident has successfully resolved their issue and the other is awaiting a response from Gigaclear.

4. Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB)

Information regarding the CCB's survey to understand how they might better support Warm & Welcoming places in Community Buildings across Berkshire, particularly Rural/Semi Rural communities. Circulated.

5. BHIB Council's Insurance

Confirmation as of the 1st of September, BHIB Councils Insurance will start trading as Clear Councils and their name, branding and website will change accordingly.

6. Member of Public

Email enquiring as to whether the breakdown of costs for Four Houses Corner has been made available to the public and if not, requesting this is discussed as an agenda item for SMPC. With permission, this query was forwarded to the Ward Councillors.

7. WBC

Information regarding Berkshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and relevant link <https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/berkshire-local-nature-recovery-strategy>.

8. WBC

Notification that interested parties can register for the Department of Health and Social Care's Community Automated External Defibrillators (AES) Fund aimed at increasing the number of AED's in public places. Interest has been registered.

9. WBC

Notification that WBC are consulting on their Draft Statement of Licensing Policy. This was considered by Planning at their meeting on the 24th of August.

10. WBC

Notification that from Sunday 10th of September the Sunday Lime 2 Bus Service will extend to Mortimer for every other journey, giving Mortimer a service to and from Reading every two hours.

Further to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 5th of September, the Clerk had emailed the Chief Executive of WBC seeking assistance with regards to the Gigaclear issues. A response had been received from WBC's Service Director – Environment, providing an explanation as to how utility reinstatements are monitored, and remedial works undertaken. The Streetworks Team will provide advice regarding private roads if necessary.

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

- Green World Recycling Ltd regarding a clothing bank. The Clerk will respond and confirm the Council will not be discussing this further.
- WBC and a Community Speedwatch Seminar.
- Information on WBC's District Parish Conference survey.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.

23/00888/HOUSE: Darley House, Loves Wood, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 2JX

Section 73a: Variation of Conditions 2 (Approved Plans) and 3 (Materials) of previously approved application 21/02031/HOUSE: First floor extension, partial garage conversion. Alterations to fenestration, exterior finishes, roof tiles and minor internal alterations.

GRANTED – 12 July 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

5. Neighbourhood Action Group Report.

The next meeting is on the 27th of September in St John's Hall.

6. Health and Safety.

A draft Health and Safety Policy has been written and will be being circulated to members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

7. Minor Matters.

- War Memorial remedial works and cleaning: Cllr. Hill has sought the advice of a stonemason with regards to the mortar remedial work and has arranged to borrow a mobile elevated platform in order to undertake the cleaning. Cllr. Hill will confirm the day the cleaning will be going ahead and will be looking for assistance.
- Awayday: Cllr. Morsley requested some thought is given to SMPC entering a scarecrow into this year's trail for discussion at Saturday's Awayday. Councillors are requested to bring phone and laptops along to check everyone is OK accessing Office 365 in various ways.
- Clarke's Educational Foundation: Cllr. Lock confirmed they have processed/are processing 32 applications.
- Footway on Victoria Road: Cllr. Dennett confirmed the police had issue a ticket to a vehicle parked on the footway near the café which obstructed the pavement blocking the route for a wheelchair user.
- Apologies: Cllr. Hill gave his apologies for October's meeting.

23/067 Communications

To identify items for communicating

Nothing in addition to the newsletter.

23/068 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

Updated policies.

23/069 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 23/061 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

23/070 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

Cllr. Morsley reported a further meeting had been held with T A Fisher who showed plans with more details of the design for Phase 2b houses that have been redesigned to address the issue of the high wall.

5. Garth Hall

Cllr. Dennett gave a summary of the recent meeting held with RBL and provided further details of the discussion and the process for transferring the trust or selling the building if new trustees cannot be found.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:17

Next meeting: October the 12th 2023.