



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

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

These Minutes are subject to approval.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. M. Dennett (arrived at 19:57 and left after 23/089 10.), Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. H. Kilshaw, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Noonan, Cllr. A. Richardson, Cllr. M. Shaw, Cllr. J. Wells.

Clerk:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

No members of the public and no members of the press were present.

Part I

23/082 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

23/083 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. D. Butler and Cllr. N. Carter. Apologies were received from Cllr. M. Dennett as he would potentially be late.

23/084 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.

23/085 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the 12th of October 2023.

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

Cllr. Morsley, as Chairman, welcomed Cllr. H. Kilshaw and announced that Ms. B. O'Reilly had resigned from her role as Assistant to the Clerk. A meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee shall be held on the 20th of November to consider the recruitment process of a new Assistant to the Clerk and the 2023/24 pay award. Cllr. Morsley expressed the Council's thanks to Ms. O'Reilly.

23/086 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the Meeting of the Council held on the 12th of October 2023 and other updates.

1. Bank Reconciliation and Internal Financial Control: these have been undertaken for the period 1st of July – 30th of September and reported to the Finances and General Purposes Committee on the ~~5th of September~~ 2nd of November. No issues were highlighted.
2. The Public Sector Deposit Fund Return of Investment: As noted at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on the 2nd of November, the return on investment as at the 30th of September was 5.20%. As at the 30th of June 2023 it was 4.79%.
3. Community Infrastructure Levy.
West Berkshire Council (WBC) have confirmed CIL payments for the period 01/04/2023 – 30/09/2023 as:
 - 22/01422/RESMAJ (2 - 2B) Land South of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, West Berkshire £27,508.24
4. Brewery Common Tree Works: As per the tree survey commissioned by SMPC in 2019, the tree works of a Moderate and High priority should have been completed by West Berkshire Council (WBC) by the end of November. SMPC have an earmarked reserve of £7,727.00 as half the costs as agreed with WBC. WBC shall also be undertaking necessary tree works on Summerlug.
5. Youth Work: Further to the recent anti-social behaviour, Berkshire Youth, in association with WBC, have been carrying out some "detached youth work" around Mortimer. This included a free "Sports in the Park" session which they ran on the Friday of half term on the Fairground. Unfortunately, the details of the sport session were only confirmed the day before so notice for members of the public was very short. However, the session was attended by 8 young people, aged 10-11yr, who stayed for the whole 2 hours playing rounders and cricket.

In addition, the Clerk confirmed that planning for the CCTV had been approved and that the original quote for the cameras was still valid. The contractor has requested an onsite meeting and Cllr. Wells agreed to attend.

The report was received.

23/087 Items to be taken into private session

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

Not needed.

23/088 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

Cllr. Bridgman reported that the Four Houses Corner Consultation is now open and the Planning Committee will be considering how to formally respond at its next meeting.

2. Fairground and Cemetery

Cllr. Hill reported:

- The Fairground tree work has been undertaken.
- The newly replaced bollard on Hammonds Heath has been bent. Advice will be sought from the company who installed it.
- The specification for the utility square and footpath work is still outstanding but these should be available before Christmas.
- The War Memorial has been cleaned. Cllr. Hill thanked Cllrs. Bridgman and Geary and Mr. Jones for their assistance.

3. Climate and Environment Working Party

Cllr. Marsden:

- Welcomed Cllr. Richardson to the Working Party.
- Reported that the Working Party will look to connect with the other groups now involved with climate and greening issues to prevent duplication of work.
- Mortimer Greening now have two thermal imaging cameras. Twelve additional volunteers have come forward and training is being given in how to use the equipment. Surveys will be undertaken once temperatures have dropped to the required level.

4. Communications Working Party

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed:

- Cllr. H. Kilshaw is looking to join the Working Party and will assist with social media.
- The next newsletter will be issued in February and ideas for articles should be forwarded to Cllr. Bridgman.

5. Garth Hall Working Party

Cllr. Dennett confirmed some meetings have been held outside of the Parish Council by parties interested in taking on the trusteeship. As per the Public Notice, such parties must contact the Royal British Legion's agents directly. Cllr. Morsley thanked all those to date who have been involved with Garth Hall.

6. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath Working Party

Cllr Morsley reported:

- The decision deadline has been extended to the 23rd of November. This is to allow for Ridge & Partners LLP to provide further evidence required by Highways regarding the proposed plans and the accommodation of extra-large vehicles at the mini roundabouts. It is thought that permission should be granted if Highways are satisfied by the evidence provided.
- Once planning has been granted, any conditions will need to be evaluated and the costs considered.

7. The Street Footway Working Party

Nothing to report.

23/089 Items for Consideration and Resolution

Cllr. Morsley proposed agenda item 23/089 10. Foudry Brook be taken next.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

10. Foudry Brook

To receive an update and a report, and resolve that the Council writes to Sir John Redwood MP and West Berkshire Council, copied to Thames Water, with a copy of the report.

Cllr. Dennett presented a report and summarised the current situation and issues with the discharging, which is occurring outside of the conditions of Thames Water's licence. He confirmed that the Environment Agency had undertaken an inspection of the sewage works in March and had found improvement works were needed but it is unknown as to whether these have been completed or not. Thames Water's planned upgrade for the sewage works has been postponed until late 2024. Cllr. Morsley thanked Cllr. Dennett for his work regarding Foudry Brook.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution be amended to include:

- Sending the evidence regarding the discharging to the Environment Agency and asking for confirmation what actions they are undertaking.
- Inviting Thames Water to a meeting of the Council to address the concerns raised.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Dennett proposed the amended resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Dennett left the meeting.

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

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

A written report was received. Cllr. Bridgman confirmed policies are being considered for the new NP including what current policies should be retained, new policies needed and what will be covered by policies already included in the Local Plan. The application from T A Fisher, as part of the existing NDP, is anticipated for Redwoods/Reserved Land.

2. Committee and Working Party Appointments - DM

To resolve the appointment of:

- a. **Cllr. H. Kilshaw to the Communications Working Party.**
- b. **Mrs. A. Richardson to the Climate and Environment Working Party**

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

3. Dispensations

To consider the requests received and resolve the granting of the dispensation(s) in respect of the setting of the Precept:

- a. **Cllr. H. Kilshaw.**
- b. **Cllr. A. Richardson.**

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

4. **Library Working Party**

To resolve the members of a working party to consider a review of the library building.

Cllr. Morsley proposed Cllrs. Kilshaw, Lock, Marsden and Morsley be appointed to the Library Working Party.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

The Clerk will send out the income and expenditure figures provided by WBC as part of the previous review.

5. **Transfer of Council Funds**

To resolve the purchase of shares to the value of £87,527 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.

It was confirmed that Finances and General Purposes have reviewed the Council's Investment Strategy. For the Investment Strategy 2024/25, some slight changes are being proposed including a lower maximum amount for holding in the Unity Trust Bank Account. The Investment Strategy 2024/25 shall be presented at full Council in January for approval. Financial Regulations are being updated and shall also be presented to full Council for approval. Cllr. Morsley proposed the resolutions above.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

6. **Library Donation**

To resolve the payment of £3,731 as SMPC's Library contribution for 2023/2024.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. D. Kilshaw.

Resolved unanimously.

7. **Pillbox**

To resolve:

- **The Council proposes to lease the pillbox for a further three years.**
- **The signing of the declaration in relation to the new lease as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.**

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

Resolved unanimously.

8. **Internal Audit**

To receive the mid-term report for 2023/24.

The report was received.

9. **Local Council Award Scheme**

To receive a report and resolve to apply for the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) – Foundation Level in May 2024

Cllr. Richardson gave a presentation, and the scheme was discussed.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the resolution as above.

Seconded by Cllr. Geary.

Resolved with one abstention.

10. Foudry Brook

To receive an update and a report and resolve that the Council writes to Sir John Redwood MP and West Berkshire Council, copied to Thames Water, with a copy of the report.

Minuted above.

11. Cemetery Extension

To receive an update and resolve to proceed with the design for the extension.

Cllr. Noonan gave an update and confirmed that the Fairground and Cemetery Committee were happy with the design in principle but, prior to giving final approval, wanted the possibility of reducing the 30m exclusion zone to 10m explored. That work has now been undertaken and the recommendation is to proceed with the draft design.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

Thanks was given to Cllr. Noonan.

23/090 Finance**1. Accounts to the 30th of September 2023**

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 30th of September 2023 and the Balance Sheet as of that date.

The financial reports were received.

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
			6710169
1.	Salaries (Month 7 – October 2023)	£ 4,800.89	848705712 306279448
2.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 7	£ 1,260.69	1780634
3.	Real Christmas Trees Ltd – 20ft Norway Spruce & delivery – inc. VAT	£ 595.00	718620043
4.	Mortimer Cricket Club – SMPC Community Grant (<i>Decision 23/076.8</i>)	£ 1,500.00	10865

The payments were received and noted.

3. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure:

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Payment Ref
1.	Sunshine Commercial – Fairground ground maintenance September 2023 – inc. VAT (<i>+ credit of £37.04 for new padlock</i>)	£ 347.10	
2.	Aspect Ecology – Mortimer/Burghfield cycleway Precautionary Mitigation Strategy - inc. VAT	£ 1,818.00	
3.	Oliver Signs – printing Autumn newsletter – inc. VAT	£ 649.80	
4.	D. Sturt – IT monitoring & support September	£ 105.00	

5.	Tactical Facilities – Dog waste bins empties October – inc. VAT	£ 294.00	
6.	Vita Play – Play area inspection July 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 117.60	
7.	Cllr. G. Bridgman – Expenses – Newbury mileage and parking for ASWC Seminar, refreshments during War Memorial cleaning	£ 45.10	
8.	Dads Shop – Dark green metal paint, black stain and red gloss paint, paint and bristle brushes, combination lock for Euro bin, galvanised wire, tie refuse bags, 6x buckets – inc. VAT	£ 244.10	
9.	Amazon – HP LaserJet Cyan Toner for office [SMPC Card]	£ 95.80	DD
10.	Amazon - First Aid Kit and hazard tape roll for office [SMPC Card]	£ 26.32	DD
11.	Lawn Tennis Association – Venue registration 2023-2024 [SMPC Card]	£136.00	DD
12.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
13.	Google Cloud EMEA – monthly cloud storage [SMPC Card]	£ 0.31	DD
14.	Smart Pension – October 2023 (Month 7)	£ 297.22	DD
15.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (September 2023) - inc. VAT	£ 22.00	DD
16.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection October 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 114.36	DD
17.	OVO Energy – Fairground Car Park electricity 3.10.2023-2.11.2023 – inc. VAT (Account currently in credit) – inc. 5% VAT	£ 6.00	DD
18.	OVO Energy – Plot 1 Fairground electricity 23.09.23-22.10.23 – inc. 5% VAT	£16.00	DD
19.	OVO Energy – Plot 2 Fairground electricity 23.09.23-22.10.23 – inc. 5% VAT	£ 33.00	DD
20.	EE - SMPC mobile phones and 5G wifi November 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 42.00	DD

It was noted that the six buckets included in 8. was for five buckets.

Proposed for payment by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded Cllr. Noonan.

Resolved unanimously.

23/091 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. Roads, Footpaths and Commons 19/10/2023

Cllr. Marsden confirmed that she and Cllr. Bridgman had attended WBC's Community SpeedWatch seminar. As a result of the Automatic Speed Watch Camera, 375 cases of speeding have been reported in the last 12 months. Volunteers to man the Speed Indicator Device are still required.

b. Planning 26/10/2023

The meetings were noted, and draft minutes received.

2. District Councillor Reports

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

3. Correspondence:

1. Mortimer Village Partnership

Notification that the Council's "Wheels on the Bus" came second in the Funniest category in the Scarecrow Trail.

2. West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Confirmation of a new neighbourhood area designation within West Berkshire District – Enborne. The designation follows the boundary of Enborne parish.

3. WBC

Report on the West Berkshire Youth Survey for Stratfield Mortimer – circulated.

4. WBC

Notification of a proposed Community SpeedWatch Forum the aim of which will be to share good practise and create a support group for interested parties. Details to follow at a later date.

5. WBC

Notification to confirm West Berkshire Council will commence a six-week period of public consultation – ending on 15/12/2023 - in respect of proposals to redevelop Four Houses Corner and bring it back into use as a Traveller site.

6. BALC

Notification that The Woodland Trust is giving away free trees. Interested Parish and Town councils have to contact the Woodland Trust directly.

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

- WBC Community Championship Awards: Nominations can be made up until the 11th of December.
- WBC: An invitation to the Rural Issues Community Forum. *Circulated.*
- Educaf: Information regarding a project which aims to build community cohesion in West Berkshire. They meet weekly in Newbury Library.

Cllr. Morsley congratulated Cllrs. Bridgman, Kilshaw – D & K – and Geary and Mrs. Bridgman on the scarecrow and winning 2nd prize in the funniest category.

Cllr. Shaw to advise on any suitable trees from the Woodland Trust.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.**23/00879/FUL: 6A Victoria Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3SE**

Relocation of the approved commercial kitchen extractor vent.

GRANTED – 10 October 2023

SMPC Comments: The Committee had no objections to the relocation of the extractor vent, however, it noted the comments from Environmental Health (dated 10th May 2023) and would support their consultation response to the Case Officer. The Committee would look to West Berkshire Council to ensure that both the environmental issue of odours are addressed and any subsequent nuisance caused in the locality is removed.

23/01639/HOUSE: 5 Briar Lea Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3SA

Side Two Storey Extension.

APPROVED – 13 October 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections in principal but the Committee noted that the room marked up as a 'study', adjacent to a bathroom on the ground floor, could be used as an additional bedroom and ensuite, i.e. creating a four bed dwelling.

23/01894/HOUSE: 35 Stephens Close, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3TY

Erection of front storm porch.

APPROVED – 26 October 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

5. Neighbourhood Action Group Report.

The next meeting is scheduled for the 23rd of November.

6. Health and Safety.

The Clerk reported the Gyro Spiral is currently out of action. It has been cordoned off and Vita Play asked to inspect it.

7. Minor Matters.

- Trees: Cllr. Hill confirmed the WI Jubilee tree and memorial tree for PC Harper have both been planted near to the pond near the War Memorial.
- Board Games Group: Cllr. Lock reported this is restarting.
- Wokefield Commons Advisory Group meeting: Cllr. Lock reported this has not yet taken place.
- AWE Local Liaison Committee: Cllr. Bridgman reported that AWE is now a government body. There are plans to spend £15 billion over the next decade on infrastructure.

23/092 Communications

To identify items for communicating.

Council Surgeries.

23/093 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

- Local Council Award Scheme.
- Community Award – next round.
- Approval of reviewed policies.

23/094 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 23/087 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Not needed.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:33

Next meeting: January the 11th 2023.