



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday the 11th of January 2024 @ 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 20:06), Cllr. M. Dennett, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. H. Kilshaw, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Noonan, Cllr. M. Shaw.

Clerk:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

Ms. S. Taylor was present along with three representatives from The Mortimer Federation of St. John's and St. Mary's.

Part I

23/102 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

One of the representatives from The Mortimer Federation of St. John's and St. Mary's gave a summary of the work that has been undertaken to date to provide a car park close to the site of St. Mary's and confirmed they were seeking support and advice from the Council with regards to progressing the project.

23/103 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. A. Richardson and Cllr. J. Wells. Apologies were received from Cllr. N. Carter as he would potentially be late.

23/104 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.

Cllrs. Bridgman and D. Kilshaw declared a non-pecuniary interest in 23/110 4. Community Grant due to their association with some of the groups applying.

23/105 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of the 23rd of November 2023.

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

23/106 Chairman's Remarks

Cllr. Morsley:

- Wished everyone a Happy New Year.
- Introduced Ms. S. Taylor as the recommended replacement for the Assistant to the Clerk.
- Asked for ideas for a topic for April's Annual Parish Meeting.
- Informed the Council that nominations for the Community Award will shortly be advertised via social media and the newsletter.

23/107 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the Meeting of the Council held on the 9th of November 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 23rd of November 2023 and other updates.

1. Members' Bid: The bid for the Victoria Road improvement works was successful.
2. Backpay: Further to the agreed national pay award, the backpay due was paid as part of November's salary run.
3. The Public Sector Deposit Fund:
 - i. A purchase of shares to the value of £87,527 was made on the 8th of December.
 - ii. As noted at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on the 2nd of January, the return on investment as at the 30th of November was 5.30%. As at the 30th of September it was 5.20%.
4. Breast Screening Van: The van is due to visit Mortimer and be sited in the Fairground car park from Monday the 12th of February for 6-8 weeks.
5. Polling Review: The response to West Berkshire Council's (WBC) polling review was submitted as follows: *"The review identifies the Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre as the polling station for YSD1 and YSD2. We agree and would not propose any change to the current arrangements, which seem to work well."*

The report was received.

23/108 Items to be taken into private session

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

Cllr. Morsley proposed that agenda items 23-110 4. Community Grant and 23-110 6. Assistant to the Clerk be taken with the public excluded.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

Cllr. Morsley moved agenda item 23/110 1. Mortimer St Mary's Parking to be taken next.

23/110 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Mortimer St Mary's Parking

To receive an update on the plans for parking and resolve any further actions.

Aspects of the school's proposed car park project and other relevant issues were discussed along with the Council's allotment project. Both projects will potentially share the same site which has been identified by Englefield as being the most suitable. Both projects are still in the early stages. The Council expressed their support for the car park project and agreed both parties should work together where appropriate. Further information should be available after the joint meeting being held on Thursday the 18th of January with WBC officers to look at the parking issues.

23/109 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Finance and General Purposes

Cllr. Morsley confirmed that the Committee had:

- Set up an Emergency Plan Working Party.
- Agreed responses to WBC's budget consultation which had been submitted.

2. Planning Committee

Cllr. Bridgman reported that the Committee was:

- seeking confirmation from WBC as to how the Tower House Phase 2b retaining wall and the open space at the bottom of the development were to be maintained.
- Working in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to agree the responses to the Inspector's comments on WBC's Local Plan Review.

3. Climate and Environment Working Party

Cllr. Marsden gave an update and confirmed the Working Party is currently looking at:

- Sewerage discharge into Foudry Brook
- Community & Low Carbon Energy Schemes
- Public EV Charging Points
- Climate Goals & Risk Management
- Emergency Planning
- Providing a link between other third parties having similar interests.

4. Communications Working Party

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed an email had been issued regarding articles for the next newsletter. Copy deadline is the 26th of January.

5. Garth Hall Working Party

Cllr. Dennett confirmed that the Royal British Legion has received some interest in taking over the Trusteeship and the Trust's lawyers are reviewing the applications on whether their proposals align with the Trust.

6. The Street Footway Working Party

Nothing to report.

23/110 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Mortimer St Mary's Parking

To receive an update on the plans for parking and resolve any further actions.

Minuted above.

2. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

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

A written report was received.

3. Budget

To receive and resolve the Budget and Precept of £149,319.00, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

It was noted that:

- Finance and General Purposes will be reviewing the reserves held by the Council at its meeting in June.
- The Council will be looking to introduce a three-year budget.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the Budget and Precept of £149,319.00 be adopted.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

4. Community Grant

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

Minuted at Part II.

5. Council Policies and Documents

To receive and approve the following as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

- a. Data Protection Privacy Notice**
- b. Financial Regulations**
- c. Investment Strategy**
- d. Procurement Terms.**

It was proposed that the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman/Vice Chairman, should be able to amend minor spelling and grammatical errors in Council policies.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the approval of the four documents.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

6. Assistant to the Clerk

To receive an update on the recruitment process undertaken and resolve:

- a. the appointment of the Assistant to the Clerk.**
- b. the starting date.**
- c. the starting salary.**

Minuted at Part II.

7. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

To receive a report from the MBCF Working Party and resolve:

- a. A budget of up to £5000 for the next phase of work**
- b. The Clerk seeks quotes for work identified and in conjunction with the MBFC Working Party and Chairman, places an order for the required work.**

Cllr. Morsley presented the report and proposed the resolution as above.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

23/111 Finance

1. Accounts to the 30th of November 2023

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

The financial reports were received.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Approved unanimously.

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

To receive and note summary of payments.

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Payment Ref
1.	Salaries (Month 8 – November 2023) includes backpay	£ 6,175.56	120366195 477736214 411488838
2.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 8	£ 2,196.78	349649021 49920854
3.	Salaries (Month 9 – December 2023)	£ 4,691.83	448356213 927861511
4.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 9	£ 1,294.82	116882495
5.	MVP – Music PPL Queen’s Jubilee event – inc. VAT	£ 490.40	98757782
6.	Claire Connell – provision of internal audit services for Y/E 31.03.2024 - interim visit and report	£ 260.00	282821076
7.	Dads Shop – paint brush x2, buckets, combi padlock x2, key tags x4, refuse bags, WD-40, Jeeves fluid, cable ties, AAA batteries for office equipment, wire brushes x2 – inc. VAT	£ 109.39	986339368
8.	D. Overett – flowers for NDP admin assistant (baby)	£ 51.47	138926314
9.	Englefield Estate – Cemetery quarterly rent 25/12/23 to 24/03/2024	£ 62.50	93554727
10.	D. Sturt – IT support and monitoring October 2023	£ 105.00	476128418
11.	D. Sturt – IT support and monitoring November 2023	£ 105.00	476128418
12.	Sapling – Cemetery tree survey November 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 811.56	597465269
13.	Vita Play – playground inspection and report October 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 117.60	101615097
14.	Sunshine Commercial – Fairground ground maintenance October 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 384.14	230995152
15.	Sunshine Commercial – Fairground ground maintenance November 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 384.14	230995152
16.	Tactical Facilities – Cemetery grounds maintenance 06.11.23 – inc. VAT	£ 78.78	343249591
17.	Tactical Facilities – Cemetery and pillbox ground maintenance 24.11.2023 – inc. VAT	£ 79.20	343249591
18.	Tactical Facilities – Dog waste bin collections November 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 235.20	692677864

19.	Oliver Signs – SMPC October newsletter print x2000 - inc. VAT	£649.80	164272736
20.	Oakey Tree Services – Fairground tree works – inc. VAT	£ 960.00	199146655
21.	West Berkshire Council – annual rent for West End Road Car Park 02.12.2023-01.02.2024	£ 10.00	366105178
22.	West Berkshire Council – contribution to WB Libraries 2023/24	£ 3,731.00	690514795
23.	IC2 Distribution – 50% deposit due before installation of CCTV on The Fairground – inc. VAT	£ 7,026.00	285738459

The payments were received and noted.

3. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure:

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Payment Ref
1.	Tactical Facilities – Dog waste bins empties December – inc. VAT	£ 235.20	885691784
2.	Cllr. D. Morsley – Expenses: SMPC Christmas meal tip	£ 50.00	293046694
3.	Cllr. D. Morsley – Expenses: Christmas meal payment for Assistant to Clerk	£ 29.95	293046694
4.	Cllr. D. Morsley – Expenses: Christmas gift for Clerk & Custodian in lieu of Christmas meal	£ 60.00	293046694
5.	Unity Trust Bank – Manual Credit Handling Charge Oct-Dec 2023	£ 2.10	DD
6.	Unity Trust Bank – Service Charge	£ 33.00	DD
7.	ToolChimp - ABUS GRANIT 37RK/55 Padlock and delivery – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 97.88	DD
8.	PayPal – 2x ABUS replacement Security Keys– inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 27.41	DD
9.	Post Office Counter (Reading) – First Class stamps for office [SMPC Card]	£ 58.00	DD
10.	Amazon - A4 80gsm Paper - Box of 5 Reams [SMPC Card]	£ 24.66	DD
11.	Royal British Legion – Remembrance Wreath [SMPC Card]	£ 25.00	DD
12.	Vista Print – 2x Roller Banners – inc. VAT [SMPC Card]	£ 100.68	DD
13.	Bitdefender – software security annual subscription [SMPC Card]	£ 33.00	DD
14.	Land Registry – 5x registry searches [SMPC Card]	£ 15.00	DD
15.	Google Cloud – monthly cloud storage [SMPC Card]	£ 0.67	DD
16.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee November 2023 [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
17.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee December 2023 [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
18.	Smart Pension – November 2023 (Month 8)	£ 448.94	DD
19.	Smart Pension – December 2023 (Month 9)	£ 303.33	DD
20.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (November 2023) - inc. VAT	£ 22.00	DD
21.	Smart Pension – Monthly fee (December 2023) – inc. VAT	£ 22.00	DD
22.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection December 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 94.88	DD
23.	OVO Energy – Fairground Car Park electricity 3.11.2023-2.12.2023 – inc. VAT (Account currently in credit) – inc. 5% VAT	£ 6.00	DD
24.	OVO Energy – Plot 1 Fairground electricity 23.11.23-22.12.23 – inc. 5% VAT	£16.00	DD
25.	OVO Energy – Plot 2 Fairground electricity 23.11.23-22.12.23 – inc. 5% VAT	£ 33.00	DD

26. BT – Charges 01.12.23 to 29.02.24 – inc. VAT	£ 239.58	DD
27. EE - SMPC mobile phones and 5G wifi December 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 42.00	DD
28. EE - SMPC mobile phones and 5G wifi January 2024 – inc. VAT	£ 44.12	DD

Proposed for payment by Cllr. Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

Resolved with one abstention.

23/112 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. Finance and General Purposes 02/11/2023
- b. Planning 23/11/2023
- c. Planning 07/12/2023
- d. Finance and General Purposes 07/12/2023
- e. Planning 21/12/2023
- f. Finance and general Purposes 02/01/2024

The meetings were noted, and draft minutes received.

2. District Councillor Reports

A written report was received. Dist. Cllr. Carter also provided an update on the flooding reporting system, a current encroachment issue and the response time for dealing with potholes.

3. Correspondence:

1. West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Information regarding the newly adopted Licensing Policy - *circulated*.

2. Healthwatch West Berkshire

Information on the role of Healthwatch West Berkshire.

3. WBC

Information on how the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings may be marked.

4. The Federation of Mortimer St Mary's and St John's

Information regarding the consultation on the 2025/26 Admissions Policy for Mortimer St Mary's C of E Junior School.

5. WBC

Confirmation that WBC are looking to reinstate the Willink Recreation Joint Advisory Committee. This has been delayed to date due to limited capacity.

6. WBC

Information regarding the consultation on "Balancing the Council's Budget" – circulated and considered by F&GP at their meeting on the 07/12/2023.

7. BALC

November newsletter – *circulated*.

8. Local Plan Services

Confirmation that Planning Inspector had been appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct an examination into the soundness and legal compliance of WBC's Local Plan Review and

inviting further written comments and statements – *has been considered by the Planning Committee.*

9. WBC

Details of the next district Parish Conference: Tuesday 30th January, 2024 , 2 - 4.30pm, at Shaw House, Church Road, Newbury, RG14 2DR - *circulated.*

10. WBC

Information on new monthly Bitesize Briefings being run by WBC which are aimed at anyone who works with children, young people, adults, and families across West Berkshire

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

- Resident: Reported an issue with black ice on the pavement in Croft Road near the footpath from West End Road. Potentially due to a defect in the pumped drainage system which was previously installed to deal with flooding in Croft Road, surface water is collecting and freezing. The problem has been reported to WBC who have undertaken an inspection and will be investigating further.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.

23/01514/FUL: The Fairground, The Street, Mortimer, Reading

Installation of CCTV on the recreational area of The Fairground - two CCTV cameras mounted each on two aluminium pole attached to and located at the north-western and south-western corners of the existing tennis court compound fence to a total height of 6m.

GRANTED – 8 November 2023

SMPC Comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council are not commenting on this application as we are the applicant for the installation.

23/02455/NONMAT: 45A Windmill Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3RJ

Application for a Non-Material Amendment Following a Grant of Planning Permission 22/02675/HOUSE - Single storey rear extension and full width rear dormer at loft level. Various changes to doors and windows. Amendments: Installation of air source heat pump at ground level on exterior right-hand side of house. Installation will comply with Micro Generation Installation Standard: MCS 020. Heat pump will be a Vaillant aroTHERM plus 7kw model with maximum sound power level of 55 dB(A).

REFUSED – 14 November 2023 (heatpump located within 1 meter of boundary with neighbouring property)

23/01525/FUL: Church of St Mary, The Street, Mortimer, Reading

New handrails to south porch of church.

GRANTED – 15 November 2023 (with condition on materials used)

SMPC Comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council supports the application and welcome the addition of handrails to the south porch which will enhance accessibility to members of the congregation.

23/01669/HOUSE: 9 Briar Lea Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3SA

Addition of a flat roof dormer on front roof slope to existing loft conversion.

GRANTED – 29 November 2023

SMPC Comments: The Committee have no objection to the addition of a flat roof dormer on the front of the property but noted that, with the additional bedrooms in the loft space, there was only one WC and shower room for what is effectively going to be a six-bedroom home. (Plans were amended to include two pitched roof dormers as one large flat roof dormer was considered to be unacceptable. WBC considered not necessary to re-consult the Parish Council on the amended plans.)

23/01840/FUL: Roseland, Laneswood, Mortimer, Reading RG7 3UW

Change of use of land to extend domestic curtilage.

GRANTED – 30 November 2023

SMPC Comments: The Committee has no objections, however, it was not clear what the land use was being changed from, as this was not stated in the planning application.

23/02498/NONMAT: Land South Of Tower Gardens, The Street, Mortimer Common, Reading

Application for a Non-Material Amendment Following a Grant of Planning Permission 19/00981/OUTMAJ - Section 73: Variation of condition 6-approved plans of approved application 17/03004/OUTMAJ. Minor alterations and regularisation to the areas denoted as public open space across the wider development. The approved public open space plan was submitted as part of the original hybrid application, and prior to the recent Reserved Matters (RM) consents for each of the development phases being submitted and approved, each of which has altered the areas noted as public open space to a greater or lesser degree. This submission is intended to regularise the series of minor alterations to the approved plan and present a comprehensive plan of the site showing the areas allocated as public open space. There is no increase in built form, floor area or dwelling/bedroom numbers proposed as a result of these changes.

APPROVED – 1 December 2023

SMPC Comments: The Committee had no objection but the parish council would want to see a facility shown on the plans for the intended footpath at the south-western corner of the development that would give access to Drury Lane as informally agreed with the applicant.

23/02218/HOUSE: 84 The Avenue, Mortimer, Reading RG7 3QX

First floor side and rear extension, together with new ground floor green roof.

GRANTED – 7 December 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

23/02139/HOUSE: 15 Mortimer Hall, The Street, Mortimer, Reading, RG7 3NS

Proposed external changes at ground floor level include relocating the front window from the centre of the façade to off centre, to allow space for a new proposed front door with a new cantilevered pitched roof canopy above.

GRANTED – 18 December 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

23/02227/HOUSE: 27 King Street, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3RS

Proposed Replacement Porch.

GRANTED – 18 December 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections.

23/02392/RESMAJ: Land South Of Tower Gardens The Street Mortimer Common Reading

Section 73 - Application for Variation of a Condition 6 (Approved Plans) following Grant of Planning Permission 23/00297/RESMAJ - 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.

GRANTED – 5 January 2024

SMPC Comments: Whilst making it clear that, given the Committee had made it explicit that it reserved its position until this planning application was submitted, the Committee objected to the applicant's statement in their covering letter (dated 13 October 2023) that (at the Committee meeting on 12 October), "these proposals were positively received and have the in-principal support of the Parish Council as a result", the Committee welcomed the changes proposed, have no objections to the changes, and believe it a better solution from that originally proposed in application 23/00297/RESMAJ.

5. Councillor Surgeries

It was agreed for Cllr. D. Kilshaw to create a poll to establish suitable dates/times for the latter half of February and March with sessions being promoted in the next newsletter and via social media. The success of surgeries shall be reviewed at subsequent meetings.

6. Neighbourhood Action Group Report.

The NAG minutes from November have been circulated. The next meeting is scheduled for February.

7. Health and Safety.

The Clerk reported:

- The Gyro Spiral has been fixed.
- PAT testing has been undertaken in the office by WBC.
- Play area remedial works are being considered at the Fairground and Cemetery meeting on the 18th of January.
- A resident has reported that two trees have been blown over on Brewery Common and are leaning on other trees. As WBC are responsible for the maintenance on Brewery Common, this issue has been reported to the Countryside Manager.

8. Minor Matters.

- Friends of Mortimer Library (FoML): Cllr. Lock reported that FoML are arranging their first event to promote the use of the library.
- Windmill Court: Cllr. Hill reported that five residents remain living in Windmill Court due to lack of suitable alternative accommodation.
- War Memorial: Cllr. Hill reported the lime mortar remedial works will be undertaken in May. Cllr. Noonan volunteered to help.
- Fairground Car Park: Cllr. D. Kilshaw reported there was an issue with a vehicle being left in the car park during the day and then being used at night for anti-social behaviour. It was agreed for the car park to be temporarily locked overnight to try and resolve the issue.

23/113 Communications**To identify items for communicating.**

- The arrival of the breast screening van will be added to the newsletter if space.
- Dates and times of Councillor Surgeries.

- Community Award nominations.
- Fairground car park overnight closing

23/114 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

23/115 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 23/108 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

23/110 Items for Consideration and Resolution

4. Community Grant

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

Cllrs. Bridgman and D. Kilshaw re-iterated their non-pecuniary interest in 23/110 4. Community Grant. Cllrs. Geary, H. Kilshaw and Morsley also declared a non-pecuniary interest due to their association with groups applying.

The applications were considered, and the following grants resolved:

- Burghfield and Mortimer Volunteer Bureau - £1,500.00
- Daisy's Dream - £360.00
- Mortimer Methodist Church - £1,200.00
- 1st Mortimer Scouts - £1,500.00
- Mortimer Table Tennis Club - £300.00
- The Oaks Childcare Clubs - £1,500.00

A separate vote was taken on the application by the Burghfield Santas.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the grant be awarded.

Seconded by Cllr. D. Kilshaw.

The vote was not carried with 1 in favour, 7 against and 5 abstaining.

Cllr. Morsley proposed to extend the meeting.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved by majority vote.

6. Assistant to the Clerk

To receive an update on the recruitment process undertaken and resolve:

- a. the appointment of the Assistant to the Clerk.**
- b. the starting date.**
- c. the starting salary.**

As the recommended candidate, Cllr. Morsley proposed that Ms. S. Taylor be appointed to the role of Assistant to the Clerk, to commence on the 5th of February on a 3-month probationary period and be paid the appropriate rate relevant to the job and experience as per that advertised.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously (Cllr. Carter was absent from the room for the vote).

Close

The meeting closed at 21:35

Next meeting: February the 8th 2024.