

# **STRATFIELD MORTIMER PARISH COUNCIL**

Newletter – Spring 2024



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## A warm welcome to this edition...

... of your parish newsletter and, as always, many thanks to everyone who has contributed to its production and distribution.

For this edition I'd like to add my thanks to those expressed elsewhere for

Bernise O'Reilly who, until very recently was (as the Council's Assistant to the Clerk) the person who put this newsletter together. Having undertaken that task myself this time around, I can fully appreciate her skills!

Bernise has earned a deserved retirement and we all wish her the very best (more about her, and her replacement, further on the this edition).

As always, I hope that you find this edition interesting and useful – to follow anything up and contact the Parish Office, or any of your Parish Councillors, please see the details below, and on the SMPC website. All the best.

*Graham Bridgman (Editor and SMPC Vice-Chairman)*



## Front Cover

Just prior to Remembrance Sunday a small team of Parish Councillors, ably assisted by Ed Jones (Oakey Tree Services) and his mobile platform, did their best to clean the war memorial, following strict War Memorials Trust guidance—using just water and natural bristle brushes.

The old grouting has been removed and we will be replacing it with lime mortar once the danger of frost is over.

*Steve Hill*



## Introduction

In the last edition I announced that the Parish Council was entering a scarecrow in the MVP Scarecrow Trail, and to look out for our big red bus.

Well, it appeared as promised (see picture on welcome page), and won second place in The Funniest category! Thanks to those who constructed it (Dave and Hugh Kilshaw, Graham and Joan Bridgman, and Heath Geary) and to all those who voted for us!

The main news since last time is that we have received planning permission for the footpath/cycleway between Mortimer and Burghfield—much more about this in the article further on, but it's been a long haul to this point (and the work is nowhere near over).

We also saw the co-option of a new councillor, Hugh Kilshaw, who has taken over where Keeleigh Field left off by bringing our average age down somewhat! Again, more below.

A date for your diaries is the Annual Parish Meeting on 29 April (St John's Hall at 19:30), when we will be looking at various of the parish projects underway, and giving our annual report, amongst other things.

Something else we have introduced (that arose from our discussions at the SMPC Awayday I wrote about last time) is councillors' surgeries, where the public get to talk to Parish Councillors about anything they want to raise. More about this below, and lookout for future dates.

As detailed more fully in a separate article, the Parish Council recently voted on our budget for the year and I am very pleased that, once again, we kept the same precept amount without any increase (indeed, because there are more properties in the parish than last year, the element of your council tax that goes to SMPC will actually go down by a miniscule amount!).

Finally from me, let me add my thanks to those elsewhere to Bernise, who has done a sterling job as Assistant to the Clerk and fully deserves her well-earned retirement! Welcome aboard to Sallyann Taylor, who will have joined us by the time you read this.

*Danusia Morsley, Chairman, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council*

## Mortimer to Burghfield Footpath and Cycleway

The Parish Council was relieved to finally receive planning approval from West Berkshire Council for this project just before Christmas.



After discussions, WBC Highways have agreed to take on the design and delivery of the road crossing at the Burghfield end of the route, which has removed some issues with getting approval for the plans.

It meant that the plans had to be altered at the last minute to remove the crossing—which will now be subtly different (and delivered by WBC Highways from funding they expect to have available).

The next step is for certain design details to be completed; these include design of the small bridge, signage, drawings showing cross-sections at various points and detailed specification of materials. The planning conditions imposed in the decision notice also need to be addressed—the Parish Council is now obtaining quotes for this work, and work on the legal agreements with landowners will be conducted in parallel.

*Danusia Morsley*

## Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

### *The Neighbourhood Plan – to 2039*

The work on the new Neighbourhood Plan (NP) progresses apace, with recent reviews of the following key policy themes:

- Climate Change Resilience & Adaptation
- Facilities, Services and Employment
- Highways & Transport
- Renewable Energy
- Natural Environment

The focus has been on how each area is dealt with by the West Berkshire Council (WBC) Local Plan Review 2022 – 39 (the LPR) and to make sure that the LPR

covers the specific needs of Mortimer. In certain areas we have identified additional responses to include in our NP, to reflect the needs and wishes of our community.

There is further work to be done with respect to Housing and Design codes, for which external support is required.

Once the review of the key policy themes has been completed, these will be made available to the public for further consultation before being formally written up into the prescribed NP format.

As a reminder, the NP will run to 2039 and deals only with planning issues. Whilst at this time Stratfield Mortimer Parish is not required to take additional housing by WBC (unlike the requirement in the 2017 NDP that led to the Tower House Farm development), the importance of this plan is to ensure that any developments that may occur, between now and 2039, strictly adhere to the wishes of the community as documented in the NP.

### ***Reserved Land (MOR006) Project***

This project has met some key milestones in recent months to progress the delivery of the vision, widely supported by the community, for the reserved land behind St John's School.

In September SMPC resolved that the terms of the review of reserved land (MOR006), as required by the NDP 2017 had been met in full, and additionally agreed to the modifications for the use of the site to provide the following:

- Outdoor Play space for St John's School (including staff parking)
- New building for relocation of Dental Practice
- Reserve space for possible future Medical Facility
- 20 new homes reserved for senior residents.

Following the above, the NP Steering Group, SMPC Planning Committee and the Developer TA Fisher (TAF), met to discuss some of the finer details of the plan resulting in the submission by TAF of a planning 'pre-application' prior to a full application for planning permission.

It is now hoped that this project is well on its way to a successful outcome for Mortimer.

*Doug Overett*

## New Councillor

The Parish Council was extremely pleased to co-opt Hugh Kilshaw to fill the vacancy for a councillor at our October meeting. As he is far and away (by many decades) our youngest councillor, I hope he will be able to stay involved with the Parish Council for a very long time! I strongly welcome the greater involvement of younger people I am sure he will bring.

*Danusia Morsley*

Hello all - I'm honoured to serve as your new Parish Councillor.

Having spent all 23 years of my life here and attended the local schools, I'm deeply rooted in our community. I'm eager to bring fresh ideas and initiatives to the council, with a strong belief in leveraging technology to make our community even more proactive and connected. Together, let's embark on this journey to enhance the vibrancy of our village.



I am committed to adopting an inclusive and participatory environment within our community. As a Parish Councillor, I encourage everyone to share their perspectives and ideas openly. Additionally, I am particularly passionate about engaging our younger community members—it's crucial that the voices of our youth are heard and considered in the decisions that shape our parish. I am dedicated to creating opportunities for the younger generation to actively participate in local initiatives and have their perspectives acknowledged within the Parish Council. By fostering this intergenerational collaboration, we can ensure a more dynamic and inclusive vision for the future of our village.

I am very interested in organizing music events and social gatherings that bring together the cross-section of our community. From vibrant village fetes, to lively performances by local live bands, and even patriotic celebrations, I believe in fostering a diverse range of activities that strengthen our community spirit. By embracing these events, complete with the rich tapestry of our community's interests, we can create memorable experiences that bind us together, celebrating the unique essence of our village life.

*Hugh Kilshaw*

## Art Competition – *My Mortimer*

The Parish Council is pleased to announce a new art competition for children.

Children living in Stratfield Mortimer and/or attending St John’s Infant, St Mary’s Junior or The Willink schools are invited to enter a piece of artwork which illustrates “My Mortimer”.

Entries may be drawn, painted or collage— photographs or 3D entries are **not** permitted this year. There will be a prize of £50 for the best entry in each of three categories: School Years R-2; 3-6, and 7-13. Further prizes will be awarded depending on the number of entries.



The Mortimer Schools Federation and The Willink will be also informing parents about the competition and inviting children to take part at home.

- ⇒ Entries must be delivered to the Parish Office between 25 and 29 March and must have the following information firmly attached to **the back** of the artwork:
- ⇒ Name of the artist;
- ⇒ School Year and school attended;
- ⇒ Home address;
- ⇒ Email address for contact.

All entries will be exhibited at the Annual Parish Meeting in St John’s Hall on 29 April –the winners will be announced then and prizes awarded.

*Danusia Morsley*

## Outside Bodies

To continue our series of articles about the external bodies that the Parish Council appoints members/representatives to, we turn to The Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Charity (often called The Fairground Trust). First though, a little local history.

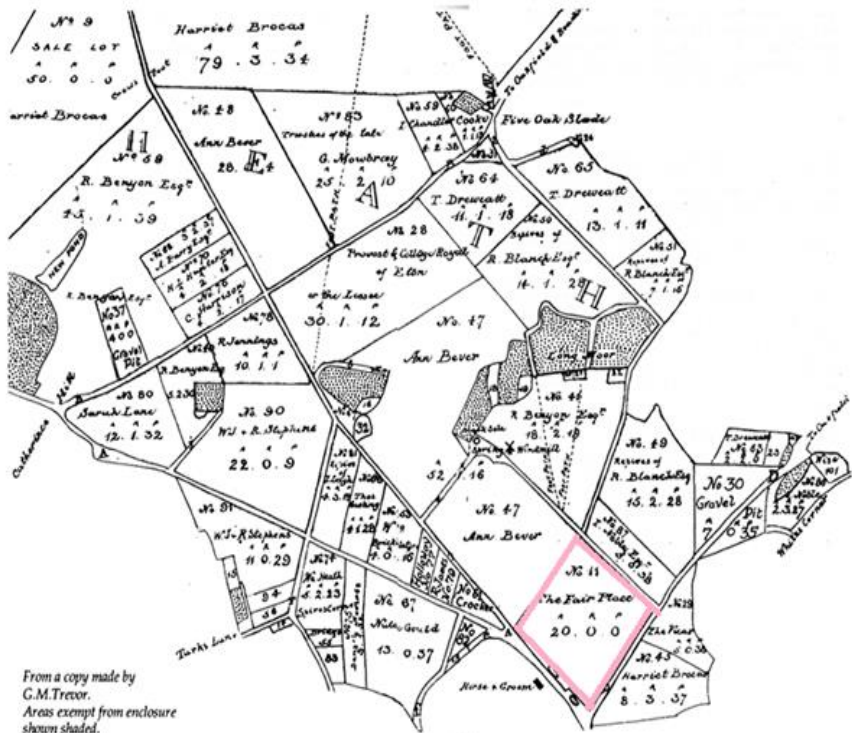


# Mortimer Fairground

The Fairground was formed by the Stratfield Mortimer (Berkshire, Hampshire) Inclosure Act 1802.

From *The Enclosure Of Mortimer Common 1801 - 1806*, in turn extracted from *Mortimer Through the Ages* (© Mortimer Local History Group, 1994): "... local landowners were in favour of enclosure and a meeting was held at the Horn Inn (now the Railway Inn)" [and now the Cinnamon Tree] "on 13th November 1801. Enough signatures were obtained for a bill to be presented to Parliament ... The twenty acres set aside for the annual fairs is today our most valued open space. The horse fairs were held there until after the First World War since when it has been the village recreation ground" - previously fairs were held in the field behind the Horse & Groom.

Part of the 1802 Enclosure Map of Mortimer Common



An extract from *Mortimer Through the Ages* © Mortimer Local History Group, 1994

## The Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Charity

The charity was set up in 2005 to formalise the arrangements under which the Parish Council uses and manages the Fairground. The Fairground Charity (“the Trust”) owns the Fairground and the Parish Council leases it (and pays a yearly rent to the Charity, currently £2,701).

The Parish Council is responsible for the day-to-day running of those 20 acres that make up the Fairground including the playgrounds, the tennis courts and all the grassed and wooded areas.

SMPC manages and pays for the maintenance of the Fairground and the structures on it (but not the Community Centre, which is owned by a separate Community Interest Company and is not managed by SMPC or the Trust) and if SMPC wishes to make a material change on the Fairground (for example when fitness equipment was installed), the Trustees are always consulted and their permission obtained.

The Trust has five Trustees, each appointed for a four-year term as follows:

- two by the Parish Council;
- one by the Annual Parish meeting;
- one by The Englefield Estate Trust Corporation Ltd;
- one by Clarke’s Educational Foundation Charity.

The object of the charity is *the relief in need of the residents of the civil parish of Stratfield Mortimer.... by relieving need generally or individual persons resident in the area of benefit who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons.*

The Trustees achieve these aims by giving small grants to other charities or organisations which are undertaking such work—they meet at least twice a year to receive a report from the Parish Council on work on the Fairground, and to discuss any requests for grants that have been received.

Applications for such grants can be made at any time to the Trust Secretary (but since the Trust is in the process of appointing a new Secretary, these may be sent to the Parish Clerk).

*Danusia Morsley (Trustee appointed by SMPC)*

## **Burghfield and Mortimer Neighbourhood Action Group**

November's meeting of BMNAG, hosted in Burghfield Village Hall, was very well attended with 20 members of the public as well as Parish Councillors from Burghfield and Mortimer and three members of Thames Valley Police, in attendance.

The Police were able to report on crime figures for the areas, which indicated that in Mortimer there was a definite increase in Anti-Social Behaviour. This was also reported for Burghfield, although one area that is not specifically recorded in the data is shoplifting (which is indicated as related to the ASB).

There was a common theme to the ASB and shoplifting, in particular in relation to the Tesco in Burghfield, and this was discussed at length by virtually all of the public members. The Police commented that a similar issue had been the case in Mortimer a few months ago and they intervened. This seems to have had an impact on the Mortimer incidents, but may have moved the problem to Burghfield. The Police are very active in both villages at the moment doing proactive work—there are certainly more police cars visible. The number of reports for all sorts of crime were up and this has caused the Police to focus their efforts on our area—the message remains to report all crime. If you see a crime in progress call 999, but if you need to report a crime after the event then use 101.

The next BMNAG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 14 February from 19:30 at the Community Centre on Mortimer Fairground.

*Dave Kilshaw*

## **Stratfield-Mortimer Parish Council Surgeries**

### ***A new initiative***

Towards the end of 2023, Parish Councillors decided that it was important for us to improve the way we engage with the community. One idea (of several) was to try to meet the community face-to-face more often. To do this, we ran our first two 'surgeries' - in the morning of 10 November at the Baobab, and in the evening of 17 November in the Horse and Groom.

At each session we had some interesting conversations and were able to provide some advice to a number of residents. We also took note of some ideas that the Council might take forward in 2024.

### ***What is a parish council surgery and how do they work?***

A parish council surgery is a regular meeting where residents of a parish can talk with their Parish Councillors about any local issues, concerns, or ideas they have. Your Parish Council has various powers and duties, such as maintaining some public amenities, providing grants to local organisations, and commenting on planning applications. How we do this for you is hugely important to us and we need to know we are doing so in the way you want us to.

Surgeries are open to all residents of the parish; no appointment is needed and are an informal friendly way for residents to communicate with Councillors. We want to listen to your views and opinions, answer your questions, and offer advice or information on the services that the Parish Council provides or can access. We also want to note any suggestions or feedback that our residents have, and report them back to the full Parish Council at its next meeting.

### ***What are the benefits of a parish council surgery?***

Our surgeries have many benefits for both the residents and Councillors. Some of the benefits are that they:

- Improve the transparency and accountability of the Parish Council, as residents can see how their Councillors are working for them and what they are doing with the Parish Council's budget and resources.
- Enhance the democracy and participation of the parish, as residents can have a more direct say in the matters that affect them and their community, and influence the decisions that their Parish Council makes.
- Foster a sense of community and cohesion in the parish, as residents can meet and interact with their Councillors as well as other residents, and share common goals and views.
- Increase the awareness and understanding of the Parish Council, as residents can learn more about the role and responsibilities of the Council, the services and facilities that it offers or supports, as well as learning about where services are provided by West Berkshire Council and how to access them.

- Build a more positive relationship and trust between residents and the Council, encouraging an open and honest dialogue, and address any issues or problems that arise in a constructive and positive way.

### ***How can I find out more about my parish council surgery?***

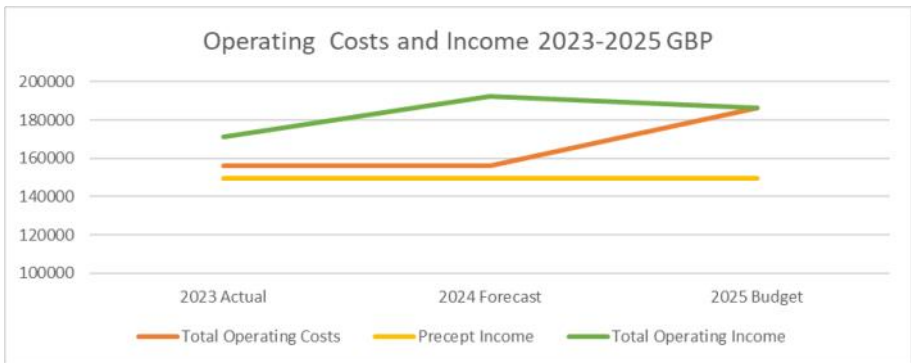
We will be advertising future surgery dates via Facebook and on our website, as well as posting notices on the village noticeboards. You can also ask your Parish Councillors directly if you see any of us in the neighbourhood.

Our surgeries are a great opportunity for you to get involved in your local community and make a difference. By attending a surgery, you can have your voice heard, get your questions answered, and help your Parish Council to serve you better

## **The Parish Council Budget 2024-25**

### ***No Increase in Parish Council Tax for the Third Year Running***

The council set its budget for 2024-2025 at its meeting on 11 January and has maintained the 2024/25 Council Tax requirement (the “Parish Precept”) in line with that for the previous two years. Due to the increase in the number of taxable properties in the parish this means the amount of Council Tax which you pay to the Parish Council will be slightly less for the forthcoming year (for example, for a Band D property, the Parish Council element of Council Tax will be £84.73 compared to last year’s figure of £87.46, a 3% decrease).



The Precept remains in line, even though the council’s operational costs for 2024/25 are forecast to be 3% higher than in 2023/24 (the increases are mainly due to plans to upgrade Fairground infrastructure; undertake a website review,

and to look at installing an additional defibrillator closer to the station). Administration costs are also expected to rise, along with the grant that the Parish Council makes annually towards the Willink Leisure Centre. Despite these predicted rises in costs, we are pleased to have been able maintain the Precept request at the same level as the previous two years.

The Precept is the council's main source of revenue income, although other income is expected from cemetery fees, the hiring out the Fairground, and fees for use of the tennis courts.

As well as revenue income, SMPC may receive Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), via West Berkshire Council. CIL is a payment made by developers as a result of obtaining planning permission that can be spent to improve community infrastructure (ie capital as opposed to revenue)

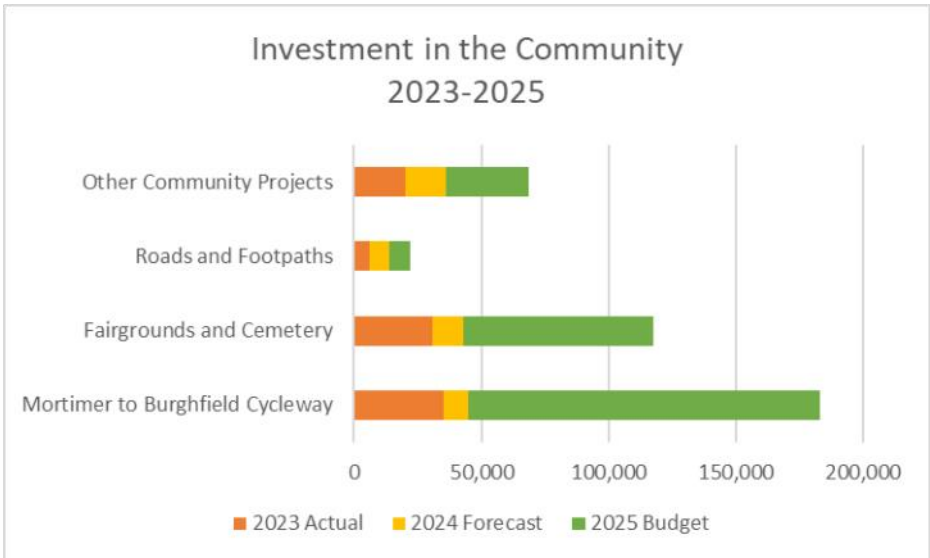
For 2023/24, nearly £82,000 of CIL was received from the housebuilding on Tower House Farm, with a further £95,520 expected for the coming financial year (plus potential sums from other sites presently unknown [but not, for example, from the Windmill Court site proposal if it gets permission because that is planned to all be affordable housing which doesn't attract a CIL liability]). Further CIL in respect of Tower House Farm (eg if the plans for the reserved land described in the Neighbourhood Plan article above come to fruition) will be dependent on build dates.

### ***How we are investing in the Community***

As mentioned above the council uses any CIL receipts and surpluses on capital investment. Excellent progress continues to be made on the Mortimer to Burghfield cycleway and footpath—see the article elsewhere—and (now that planning permission for the project has been granted) the next stage of work involves finalising the costs and design and fulfilling the conditions invoked as part of the planning permission. A specific (“earmarked”) reserve is in place to cover some of the expected costs, but the council will also be looking for grants and other sources of funding.

Other earmarked reserves have been maintained for the new Neighbourhood Plan and, following the success of the Community Grant from which several local organisations benefited, a further fund has been set aside for 2024/25.

In addition, CIL funds have been allocated for improving the infrastructure of the Fairground and continuing the extension work on the Cemetery.



Full details of the budget are available on the council’s website under “The Council/Budget”.

*Andrew Richardson and Lynn Hannawin*

## Community Grant Fund

In recent years the Parish Council has put aside up to £10,000 annually to give out in grants of up to £1,500 to non-profit, voluntary or charitable organisations that wish to provide a service, enhance the quality of life, improve the environment or promote Stratfield Mortimer in a positive way.



The total given in grants this year has been £7,860, and the next round for applications will be in the autumn.

We are pleased to announce that for the year 2023/2024, the grants listed overleaf have been made.

*Danusia Morsley*

## Community Grant Fund Awards 2023-24

<b>Mortimer Cricket Club</b>	£1,500 to reseed the cricket pitch outfield
<b>Burghfield &amp; Mortimer Volunteer Bureau</b>	£1,500 for a website and marketing materials such as an event gazebo, banners, business cards
<b>Daisy's Dream</b>	£360 tailored bereavement support for one child
<b>Mortimer Methodist Church</b>	£1,200 for 4 protective radiator covers
<b>1st Mortimer Scouts</b>	£1,500 contribution to the costs of solar panels
<b>Mortimer Table Tennis Club</b>	£300 start up costs
<b>The Oaks</b>	£1,500 towards free or subsidised spaces for disadvantaged families, refugees, low-income families etc

## Climate & Environment Working Party

Comprising members of the Community and Parish Councillors, the Working Party was formed by the Parish Council in October 2021 to research, advise and act on matters, tactical and strategic, concerning climate change; and the protection, preservation and nurture of the natural environment that we are so lucky to have surrounding us.

We launched Greening Mortimer in January last year and this has now moved fully into the Community with continued support from the Parish Council – see the MVP Newsletter for a full update.

Examples of our many initiatives/ areas of activity include:

- Sewerage discharge into Foudry Brook
- Community & Low Carbon Energy Schemes
- Public EV Charging Points



Given the membership of the Working Party it has direct insight into the many relevant District and Parish Council, Neighbourhood Plan, and Community initiatives and activities focused on Climate and Environment, and therefore is potentially well placed to provide a bridgehead between these bodies to assist in combined effectiveness and is considering how best this could be achieved. If you would like more information on what we do or how we can combine our efforts please contact us by emailing: [amanda.marsden@stratfield-mortimer.org.uk](mailto:amanda.marsden@stratfield-mortimer.org.uk)

*Amanda Marsden*

## Speeding in the Village

Volunteers and some Parish Councillors have continued to operate the Automatic Speedwatch Camera (ASWC) under the Community Speedwatch Scheme (CSW).

In the six months July to December, 359 vehicles were reported to Thames Valley Police for serious speeding. This is speeding that would have been prosecuted if it had been directly recorded by TVP on their roadside camera or mobile camera vans.



As explained in the last newsletter, our reports lead to a warning letter being sent to the vehicle's registered owner. However, TVP retain all CSW records and a second more severe letter follows for a second report of speeding. Three reports may well lead to police intervention. When we enquired in November, TVP confirmed that 331 letters had been sent out. Of these, 31 were for a second report and of these 13 were for speeding in a different location in the TVP area. If you think that you are prone to speeding, it is worth remembering that the CSW scheme occurs across the TVP area!

The Parish Council's aim is to reduce the occurrence of speeding in the village. We think we are beginning to see that after the six months of camera operation, but that significant results will take longer. So, be warned that we will be out and about within the village!

If speeding concerns you, please consider volunteering as a camera operator. Training is given and you will always be with another operator. Sessions are flexible and fit in with what time you have available.

Thanks to a dedicated volunteer, the Parish Council also operates SID (Speed Indicator Device) which displays your speed as you pass the sign. The aim is to prompt drivers to keep within the limit. SID also stores how many vehicles are at different speeds which enables us to calculate percentages of speeders. Some recent results include:

- Coming into the village on West End Road, on a Friday morning between 07:05 and 07:50 there were 95 vehicles of which 57% were over the 30 mph limit and 28% greater than 35 mph including one at more than 50 mph.
- Going down the Street by the pedestrian crossing between 07:10 and 08:30 on a school morning 422 vehicles were recorded. Of these, 80 (19%) were breaking the limit with 2 exceeding 40mph.
- Coming into the village by College Piece between 07:00 and 07:45 on a weekday there were 81 vehicles of which 26 (32%) were breaking the limit with 2 at over 40 mph.

We will continue to use SID to help reduce speeds, any volunteers to help deploy it would be warmly welcomed.

*Mike Dennett*

## Hedges

There was more about this in the last newsletter, but a reminder to householders and land-owners who have a hedge adjacent to a road, pavement or footpath that they are obliged to keep the hedge trimmed back to their boundary.



As for the timing of a trim, this is an extract from the RSPB webpage 'Hedge cutting and nesting birds': *"We do recommend waiting until after the main nesting season (**March-September**) as the possibility of birds nesting is very high, but as long as no active nests are moved or damaged, you can legally cut vegetation year-round."*

There are a couple of weeks before the nesting season begins in March. Please help keep pedestrians, cyclists and drivers safe by keeping your hedges cut back. If you need to do it from March onwards, please take all precautions to check there are no nesting birds.

*Danusia Morsley*

## The latest ... on various things around the village

### ***Tower House Farm***

#### **Latest applications**

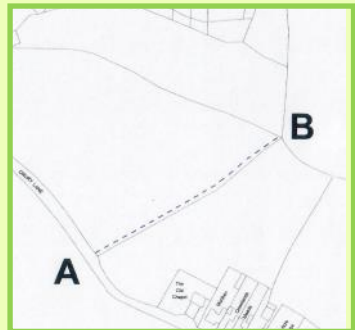
As well as noting the plans for the NDP Reserved land (see the Neighbourhood Plan article), the SMPC Planning Committee has considered a number of applications relating to the Tower House Farm development recently.

In particular, the latest planning applications related to the housing at the bottom of the site and the public open space to be established below the site.

In the last newsletter we mentioned the substantial proposed retaining wall between the housing and the public open space, which was turned down by the WBC Planning Committee, and the subsequent discussions between SMPC and T A Fisher regarding alternatives. Those discussions bore fruit and resulted in fresh planning applications, the first of which WBC have very recently granted, so the retaining wall has been reduced in length and by around 3 metres in height.

#### **A new permissive footpath**

Another aspect of the public open space discussions is that we anticipate that, following discussions with the Englefield Estate, a new permissive footpath will be created to the west of the site, up the side of the existing field and out onto Drury Lane, to connect into the proposed paths within the public open space (which will in turn connect with the existing public footpath to the west of the Avenue), so adding to the walking routes available within the village.



### ***Garth Hall***

In October (see the last newsletter) the Royal British Legion invited applications from those interested in becoming new trustees in relation to Garth Club.

We understand from RBL that there has been interest expressed, and the SMPC Garth Hall Working Party is due to meet RBL representatives shortly - until we know more there is nothing to report.

## ***Windmill Court***

In the last newsletter we referred to the planning application which had just been submitted. At the time of writing no decision has been made by WBC on that application.

## ***Four Houses Corner Gypsy & Traveller Site***

Following the WBC consultation meeting at St John's Hall in December, the meeting of the WBC Eastern Area Planning Committee scheduled for 10 January was suddenly postponed because of a last-minute objection by Thames Valley Police.

As this is written there is no revised date for the committee to meet.

## ***Pavement outside Mortimer Café***

Following a successful bid under the WBC Members' Bid Scheme for matched funding, made via Cllr Nick Carter, SMPC will be taking steps to raise the level of the footway between the bollards outside the café and the road.

The intention is to have the level of the footway (which currently looks like it is a lay-by and part of the road, such that some vehicles park on it) brought up to the same as that of the rest of the pavement.

*Graham Bridgman*

## **Potholes**

We are partway through the winter and potholes are an all too frequent annoyance. Although it can be good to warn other people about them through local Facebook groups, the really important thing is to report them to the local authority. If they are in West Berkshire <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportapothole> is the link you want – bookmark it on your computer or phone so you can report quickly.



You will see what size and shape potholes WBC will fix. You then pinpoint the location on a map and follow the instructions to enter any other information.

*Danusia Morsley*

## D Day—6 June

Another date for the diary.

On Thursday 6 June, as part of the National Tribute, the Parish Council will be organising the lighting of a beacon on The Fairground to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Normandy landings.



## A Date for the Diary—the APM

Early notice that the Stratfield Mortimer Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Monday 29 April at 7.30 pm in St John’s Hall.

The programme is under discussion but is likely to include an update on all of the projects happening in the village, plus art competition detailed on page 8, and the 2024 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award (see separate article below for how to nominate someone).

*Graham Bridgman*

## Stratfield Mortimer Community Award 2024

This is an annual award given to a person who has devoted outstanding time and energy for the benefit of the community of Stratfield Mortimer, irrespective of whether or not they live in the village.

If you know of someone who you think deserves recognition, please nominate them by completing a nomination form available to download from the Announcements area of the SMPC website or via email from [admin@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](mailto:admin@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk) or in person from Mortimer Library.

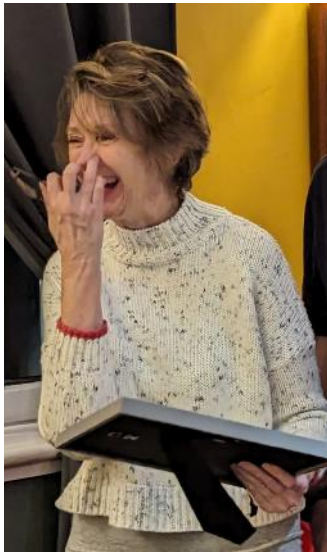
Completed forms need to be returned to the Parish Council office behind the library, and the closing date for nominations is **Sunday 10 March 2024**.

*Danusia Morsley*

## A Fond Farewell ...

It was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to Bernise O'Reilly as she retired from her role as the Council's Assistant to the Clerk at the end of January.

Bernise joined the Council in 2018, becoming a stalwart of Council life. Like me the year before, she was partly taken on to sort out the filing of several years' worth of Council documents but, although we have made some progress over the years, the nature of the busy office life means we have never quite managed to complete it!



However, Bernise's administrative background and computer skills have meant she has worked wonders with, to name but a few, developing the Council's systems, overseeing the Cemetery and regular Fairground bookings, and editing numerous newsletters. She has become an expert in managing planning, not only getting to grips with West Berkshire's planning portal but keeping the members of the Planning Committee in order – I take my hat off to her!

Unassuming, efficient, and always there to support, Bernise will be sorely missed by me and councillors alike and we wish her much fun and happiness in the years to come.

## ... and a Warm Welcome

It's a cliché but when one door closes another opens, and we welcome Sallyann Taylor to the role of Assistant to the Clerk. With her previous experience in technical support and customer service we think she will be an excellent fit. However, there is just one question left to be asked: Sallyann, what are you like with filing?

*Lynn Hannawin, Clerk to SMPC*

## CONTACT US

Parish Council Office, The Library, 27 Victoria Road, Mortimer RG7 3SH

Opening/working hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

09:30 to 17:00

0118 933 1955

[the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

Website (announcements, meetings, people, committees and policies):

<https://stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/stratfieldmortimerparishcouncil>

Neighbourhood Plan: <https://np.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/>

**Fairground Emergency contact** - for emergencies and dangerous situations:

07436 807543

**Non-emergencies** contact the Parish Council Office: 0118 933 1955

## OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

**West Berks Council:** 01635 551111

Out of hours emergencies only: 01635 42161

Report a problem online: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem>

### **West Berkshire Council Streetcare Team**

(to report problems with streets, roads, highways or pavements):

01635 519080; [streetcare@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:streetcare@westberks.gov.uk)

### **District Councillors for Burghfield & Mortimer Ward:**

Cllr Nick Carter - [nick.carter2@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:nick.carter2@westberks.gov.uk)

Cllr Geoff Mayes - [geoffrey.mayes1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:geoffrey.mayes1@westberks.gov.uk)

Cllr Vicky Poole - [vicky.poole1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.poole1@westberks.gov.uk)

## PARISH COUNCILLORS (contact details on website)

<b>Danusia Morsley</b>	Council Chairman, Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) and (as Council Chairman) member of all other committees
<b>Graham Bridgman</b>	Council Vice-Chairman, Chairman of Planning Committee (PC) and (as Council Vice Chairman) member of all other committees
<b>Stephen Hill</b>	Chairman, Fairground and Cemetery Committee (FC) and member of F&GP, PC & RFC
<b>Amanda Marsden</b>	Chairman of Roads Footpaths and Commons Committee (RFC) and member of F&GP & FC
<b>David Butler</b>	Member of F&GP & PC
<b>Nick Carter</b>	
<b>Mike Dennett</b>	Member of RFC
<b>Heath Geary</b>	Member of F&GP, FC & RFC
<b>Hugh Kilshaw</b>	
<b>Dave Kilshaw</b>	Member of RFC
<b>Mollie Lock</b>	Member of FC & PC
<b>Andrew Noonan</b>	Member of F&GP & FC
<b>Andrew Richardson</b>	Member of F&GP & PC
<b>Michael Shaw</b>	Member of FC & RFC
<b>John Wells</b>	Member of PC & RFC

