



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
held on Thursday the 14 March 2024 @ 19:30
at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer

These Minutes are subject to approval.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr G Bridgman (Chairman), Cllr N Carter, M Dennett, Cllr H Geary, Cllr D Kilshaw, Cllr H Kilshaw, Cllr S Hill, Cllr M Lock, Cllr A Marsden, Cllr A Richardson, Cllr M Shaw, Cllr J Wells.

Clerk:

Mrs L Hannawin and Ms S Taylor.

Public/Press:

There were two members of the public in attendance.

Part I

23/130 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

- One member of the public raised concerns regarding speeding in the village and asked what other measures can be taken. Councillors provided feedback regarding the deployment of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and the Automatic Speed Watch Camera (ASWC) and the Community Speedwatch programme. It was confirmed that West Berkshire Council (WBC) will only approve traffic calming measures in areas with streetlights, but the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee could look at alternative measures such as deploying auto SIDs.
- The other member of the public attended as a representative of one of the parties interested in the trust of Garth Hall and comments are minuted under agenda item 23/137 5.

23/131 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Butler, Cllr D Morsley and Cllr A Noonan.

23/132 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.

23/133 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve the Minutes of the meeting of the Council of 8 February 2024.

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

23/134 Chairman's Remarks

None made.

23/135 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the Meeting of the Council held on 8 February 2024 and other updates.

1. The Public Sector Deposit Fund

As noted at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on 2 January, the return on investment as at 31 January was 5.27%. As at 30 November it was 5.30%.

2. Bank Reconciliation and Internal Financial Control 01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023

These had been undertaken by Cllrs Noonan and Bridgman and no issues raised.

3. CCTV

Apart from the topsoil and reseeding, the installation is now complete, and training is expected to be undertaken shortly.

4. Defibrillator Cabinet

The replacement cabinets are being installed.

The report was received.

23/136 Items to be taken into private session

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

Cllr Bridgman proposed that agenda items 23/138 2. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath and 23/138 10. Assistant to the Clerk be taken with the public excluded.

Seconded by Cllr Hill.

Resolved unanimously.

23/137 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

Cllr Bridgman confirmed the Planning Committee had considered the amendments to the Windmill Road development consisting of 4 houses, the response to the Inspectors questions on the Local Plan Review, and the points raised by him as the SMPC representative at WBC's Eastern Area Planning Committee on the Four Houses Corner Application regarding the public consultation and the future management of the site by WBC as landlords.

2. Communications Working Party

The next newsletter will be delivered in June – copy deadline 24 May - and ideas for articles to be included should be emailed to Cllr Bridgman.

3. D-Day Working Party

Cllr Geary confirmed the Working Party are considering two possible options to commemorate the event both including a fish and chip supper.

4. Emergency Planning Working Party

Cllr Richardson reported that the Working Party has met, and tasks have been assigned to start developing the Emergency Plan. WBC's Emergency Planning Office has provided some guidance and has offered to review the Emergency Plan when ready. Consideration shall be given to involving key people in the community and contacting and working with other parish councils where appropriate.

5. Garth Hall

Cllr. Dennett confirmed that a meeting with the Royal British Legion (RBL) took place on Thursday 29 February and a public statement has since been issued giving an update.

The representative in attendance, for one of the parties interested in the Garth Hall trust, provided an update on the progress they had made with developing their idea for bringing the building back into community use, the funding and assistance sought to date, and resources available. They are keen to move forward with their proposal.

Further to the points raised and the recently issued public statement it was agreed for the Clerk to write to RBL to request that 1) interested parties are granted access to the hall as soon as possible and 2) the required meetings to further explore the proposals are undertaken at the earliest opportunity within the timeframe stated.

23/138 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

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

Cllr Bridgman confirmed the application for the retained wall has been approved and it is anticipated that TA Fisher will now withdraw their appeal. A decision on the Reserved Land pre-planning application is awaited. The Steering Group will be considering the Inspector's Questions on the Local Plan Review with regards to proposed policies, with any comments being submitted by the deadline of 22 March.

2. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

To receive an update and agree further actions to be taken.

Minuted at Part II.

3. Victoria Road Footway

To consider the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee with regards to the reinstatement works undertaken and resolve any actions to be taken.

The process followed and the resulting footway works (undertaken by WBC as part of a Members' Bid) were discussed with regards to the decision taken by the Council at its meeting on the 10 October 2023 and the caveat stipulated as a condition of that decision.

It was noted that the works have been a success but that the wish for consultation should WBC not accept SMPC's request regarding the design for non-dropped kerbs for the access road, had not taken place. This was a resolution taken as part of the decision to proceed with the Members Bid.

Cllr Geary proposed that the Council should not meet any payment request from WBC.
Seconded by Cllr D Kilshaw.

Not carried with 3 votes for, 4 against and 5 abstentions.

Cllr Bridgman proposed the Council should pay any invoice received up to the maximum amount agreed of £5,400.

Seconded by Cllr Lock.

Resolved with 5 votes in favour, 4 against and 3 abstentions.

4. Pillbox Terms of Access

To receive and approve the proposed Pillbox Terms of Access

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr Richardson.

Resolved unanimously.

5. Annual Subscriptions and Continues Payments

To receive and resolve the Annual Subscriptions and Continues Payments as recommended by Finance and General Purposes

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr Richardson.

Resolved unanimously.

6. Fees and Charges 2024/25

To receive and resolve the fees and charges for 2024/25 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr Richardson.

Resolved unanimously.

7. Clarke's Educational Foundation: Parish Council's Representative

To resolve the appointment of Cllr. M Lock for aa 4-year term

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr Geary.

Resolved with one abstention.

8. Committee and Working Party Appointments

To resolve the appointment of Cllr. H. Kilshaw to the Planning Committee.

Proposed by Cllr Hill.

Seconded by Cllr D Kilshaw.

Resolved unanimously.

9. Climate and Environment Working Party

To receive an update and resolve the recommendations of the Working Party to underwrite the following expenditure for Greening Mortimer Campaign:

a. £500.00 for barn owl boxes

b. £80.00 for the printing costs for the Big Mortimer Nature Watch.

It was noted, as per the report, the figure in a. should be £420.00.

Cllr Marsden proposed underwriting the expenditure of £420.00 for the barn owl boxes and £80.00 for the printing costs.

Seconded by Cllr H Kilshaw.

Resolved unanimously.

10. Assistant to the Clerk

To receive a report on the Assistant to the Clerk's probationary period and resolve any actions to be taken.

Minuted at Part II.

23/139 Finance**1. Accounts to 31 January 2024**

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

It was noted that the agenda item above should read 31 January 2024 and not 31 December 2023.

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman

Seconded by Cllr D Kilshaw

Approved unanimously.

2. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure – Schedule A i.

Item	Date of Invoice	Payee Details	Amount
1.	28/02/24	IC2: CCTV installation remaining balance inc. VAT	£7,026.00
2.	29/02/24	Alebrije Consulting Ltd: NPSG admin support	£100.00
3.	29/02/24	Dads Shop: adjustable wrench inc. VAT	£7.79
4.	01/03/24	Tactical Facilities: dog waste empties inc. VAT	£235.20
5.	05/03/24	Tactical Facilities: dog bin installation inc. VAT	£66.00
6.	05/03/24	Tactical Facilities: dog bin installation inc. VAT	£90.00
7.	07/03/24	I-Next Ltd: 2 x GDS upgrade and annual anti-spam service in. VAT	£630.00

Proposed for payment by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr D Kilshaw.

Resolved unanimously.

3. Payments made with authorisation of Chairman/Vice-Chairman and the Clerk

To receive and note summary of payments made - Schedules B i and B ii.

Schedule B i

Item	Date of Payment	Payee Details	Amount
Electronic Bank Payments			
1.	09/02/24	Cllr. A. Noonan – Expenses: construction material for cemetery gate.	£215.08
2.	09/02/24	Community Centre CIC: hall hire for NAG meeting.	£30.00
3.	09/02/24	NALC: LCAS registration fee inc VAT.	£60.00
4.	09/02/24	St John's Hall: hall hire for Annual Parish Meeting.	£40.00
5.	09/02/24	Tactical Facilities Ltd: dog waste empties Jan 24 inc. VAT	£294.00

Schedule B ii

Item	Date of Payment	Payee Details	Amount
Card Payments			
1.	09/02/24	Decorative Aggregates: construction material for cemetery gate inc. VAT.	£139.04
2.	13/02/24	Amazon: puncture proof wheelbarrow wheel inc. VAT	£12.95
3.	20/02/24	Earth Anchors Ltd: replacement dog bins and bag retainers inc. VAT	£489.60
4.	22/02/24	Amazon: box of paper inc. VAT	£24.69
5.	22/02/24	Amazon: Laminating pouches & black cartridge inc. VAT	£106.55
6.	29/02/24	Co-op: refreshments for RBL meeting	£6.30
7.	02/03/24	Mortimer Bistro: purchase in error and amount refunded to Unity Trust bank account on 05/03/2024	£31.10

Cllr Hill thanked Cllr Noonan and the custodian for their input with the cemetery gate remedial works.

The payments were received and noted.

4. Subscriptions and Continuous Payments

To receive and note summary of payments made – Schedule C.

Item	Payment Date	Payee Details	Amount
Electronic Bank and Card Payments			
1.	09/02/24	Sunshine Commercial Services: Fairground grounds maintenance December 2023 in. VAT	£384.14
2.	09/02/24	David Sturt: IT monitoring & support December 2024	£105.00
3.	09/02/24	David Sturt: IT monitoring & support January 2024	£105.00
4.	09/02/24	Tactical Facilities Ltd: cemetery hedge cutting inc. VAT	£460.56
5.	09/02/24	ICO: Data protection annual fee.	£40.00
6.	27/02/24	Microsoft: 2 x Office 365 licences.	£247.20
7.	29/02/24	Salaries (Month 11 February 2024) inc. pension contributions	£ 4616.77
8.	29/02/24	HMRC - PAYE & NI for Month 11	£1197.34
9.	01/03/24	Google: DNS network services	£0.35
	04/03/24	Lloyds: card fee	£3.00
Direct Debits			
10.	07/02/24	Smart Pension: admin fee inc. VAT	£26.40
11.	12/02/24	EE: mobile phone charges & WiFi hotspot	£42.00
12.	23/02/24	OVO: Electricity inc. VAT	£6.00
13.	29/02/24	Suez – waste collection inc. VAT	£99.58
14.	01/03/24	OVO: Electricity inc. VAT	£16.00

15.	01/03/24	OVO: Electricity inc. VAT	£33.00
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The payments were received and noted.

23/140 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:

1. **Planning 22/02/2024**
2. **Finance and General Purposes 7/03/2024**

The meetings were noted.

2. District Councillor Reports

The report was received.

3. Correspondence:

1. Hampshire Association of Local Councils

Information regarding an Annual Conference to be held on Wednesday 20th March in Whiteley. The focus will be Hampshire based but BALC members may attend if interested.

2. West Berkshire Council (WBC)

Notification of the provisional dates for the next two District Parish Conference: Thursday 17 October 2024 and Wednesday 30 April 2025.

3. Soil Association

Information regarding a Stakeholder Consultation on Forest Management. This includes Englefield.

4. Member of Public

Expressing concern regarding 1) speeding along West Road and 2) the limited width of the footway running alongside the APMF due to overgrown vegetation (this has since been addressed for most of the footway).

5. Mortimer 2012 WI

Request from the WI to "Bee Bomb" the Fairground and surrounding area for the month of May. This is an ongoing campaign from National WI and is to highlight the problems with the decline of bees and the need to protect them. International Bee Day is 20th May and will involve working with Incredible Edible Mortimer too.

6. Royal Berkshire Fire Service

Information regarding a consultation on the "Way We Respond to Automatic Fire Alarms".

7. WBC

Information regarding the Rural England Prosperity Fund – *circulated*.

8. WBC

Information regarding the SNG Commercial Support Fund – *circulated*.

9. Member of Public

Copied in in an email to WBC re complaint regarding the Gigaclear reinstatement works – *Gigaclear contact details provided and referred to Dist Cllr Carter.*

10. WBC

Information regarding a Mini District/Parish conference to be held on Thursday 23 May at 3pm. Venue to be confirmed.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.

23/02934/CERTP: Rowens, Ravensworth Road, Mortimer West End, Reading RG7 3UD

Proposed part loft conversion and insertion of 4 no. Velux skylights

APPROVED – 14 February 2024

SMPC Comments: The application was noted, and no comments were made.

23/02936/CERTP: 2 The Avenue, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3QY

Replace existing conservatory with a single storey rear extension.

APPROVED – 14 February 2024

SMPC Comments: The application was noted, and no comments were made.

23/02548/FULMAJ: Land South of Tower Gardens The Street Mortimer Common Reading

Full Planning Application for the construction of a retaining wall and for details of the appearance and landscaping within the southern public open space area pursuant to the Outline Planning Permission 17/03004/OUTMAJ as varied by the S73 Application 19/00981/OUTMAJ Land South Of Tower Gardens The Street Mortimer Common Reading
APPROVED – 6 March 2024

SMPC Comments: Whilst the Committee members have no objections in principle to this amendment and consider that the revised wall and landscaping seem a better solution to that proposed in application 23/00297/RESMAJ, they do wish to raise the following issues:

- The Block Plan - Planting and Seeding drawing (ref. 510 rev H) indicates a 'badger sett' (by a section of the proposed wall below plot no 56) which was not shown on previous layouts - can the applicant clarify the meaning of this and what are the implications of badgers being present for this application and the site generally?
- What are the proposals for the maintenance of the retaining wall? (Previous applications have referred to details of maintenance issues (generally) being dealt with in information packs (etc) supplied to new occupants, but what are the arrangements and is this happening?)
- What are the arrangements for maintenance of (a) the public open space, and (b) the SUDS ponds – if there is/are s.106 agreements please supply copies/details (they do not appear to be available via the planning portal).

The planning decisions were received.

5. Neighbourhood Action Group Report.

The NAG minutes from February have been circulated. The date for the next meeting is to be confirmed.

6. Health and Safety.

The Clerk reported the Quarterly Maintenance report has been received.

7. Minor Matters.

- Cllr Lock reported the Friends of Mortimer Library had a successful first evening event meeting two local authors.

- Cllr Hill reported the plans for the Transport Through the Ages event on the 22 June are progressing.

23/141 Communications

To identify items for communicating.

An update on the CCTV to be added to the website and Facebook page. Cllr Wells will write an article for the newsletter.

23/142 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

23/143 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 23/136 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman

Seconded by Cllr D Kilshaw

Approved unanimously.

23/144 Items for Consideration and Resolution

2. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

To receive an update and agree further actions to be taken.

It was noted that of the two quotes received for the next stage of works only the one from Ridge and Partners LLP was financially viable but was still more than the previously agreed figure of £5,000.

Cllr Bridgman proposed a further £10,000 be budgeted for the next stage of works giving £15,000 in total.

Seconded by Cllr Geary.

Resolved unanimously.

10. Assistant to the Clerk

To receive a report on the Assistant to the Clerk's probationary period and resolve any actions to be taken.

Cllr Bridgman proposed the length of the Assistant to the Clerk's probationary period be reduced with a view to her permanent contract commencing as of 1 April 2024.

Seconded by Cllr Wells.

Resolved unanimously.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:06.

Next meeting: 11 April 2024.