

STRATFIELD MORTIMER PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter–Summer 2024



Index

Welcome	3
Introduction by the Chairman	4
Parish Council Report to Annual Parish Meeting	5
Annual Parish Meeting 2024	9
Art Competition	9
Community Award 2024	11
In Memory of Frank Stansfield	12
Mortimer to Burghfield Footpath and Cycleway	13
Neighbourhood Plan	13
Speeding in Mortimer	15
Storm Discharges into Foudry Brook	17
Royal Berkshire Hospital—new hospital programme	20
New Assistant to the Clerk	22
Parish Council Surgeries	22
Defibrillator and CPR Familiarisation	24
Four Houses Corner	25
Garth Club	26
Victoria Road Restored Pavement	26
Other Bodies - AWE Local Liaison Committee	27
Trees on Parish Council Land	27
SMPC Meeting Timetable 2024-2025	29
Contacts	30
Parish Councillors	21

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.

This time around, Sallyann Taylor, who joined us in January as our Assistant to the Clerk (see her thoughts elsewhere), has drawn the short straw of putting the newsletter together (with a little help from Bernise O'Reilly, who has returned to assist just for this task – thanks Bernise!).

Sallyann has been on something of a steep learning curve since she joined, but is definitely coping well!

The news we never want to bring you is of a death in the parish family, and it saddens all of us to have to reflect on Frank Stansfield's passing – more elsewhere.

Finally, and 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 in this edition, and on the SMPC website. All the best.

Graham Bridgman (Editor and SMPC Vice-Chairman)

Front Cover

The cover photograph is of the Parish Council's compound on the Fairground, - the acknowledged domain of Frank Stansfield, who tragically died recently and is remembered elsewhere in this edition.



Introduction

On 9 May we started the new Parish Council year by holding our Annual Meeting and electing the Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and the Chairmen of Committees.

In fact, all of these have stayed the same as last year, with me elected as Chairman of the Council, Graham Bridgman as Vice-Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Planning Committee, Steve Hill as Chairman of the Fairground and Cemetery Committee, and Amanda Marsden as Chairman of the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee (and, as Chairman of the Council, I am automatically Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee).

You can find a calendar of all the council and committee meetings on the SMPC website; these all take place in the Methodist Church Hall and are all open to the public. We enjoy having people come and ask us questions, so please do feel free to attend if you have something on your mind. Another way of speaking to councillors easily is at one of our (relatively new) surgeries – please see the article elsewhere in this edition.

Having had a full complement of councillors, with the recent resignation of David Butler we now have a casual vacancy - at the time of writing it is not known whether an election will be held or we will be seeking to co-opt someone. In any event, we look forward to getting back to a full complement of councillors to enable the ongoing work of the parish council to be achieved.

Danusia Morsley, Chairman, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council



Parish Council Report to Annual Parish Meeting

At the Annual Parish Meeting, I gave the following report about the Parish Council's activities over the previous year:

"This is the report for the year May 2023 to April 2024.

Following Mike Dennett's many skilful years as Chairman, I took on this role with some trepidation; I was relieved to be strongly supported by our Vice-Chairman, Graham Bridgman.

When I was elected Chairman, we only had 13 councillors, the election just a week or two before having been uncontested. We have been lucky enough since then to co-opt Andrew Richardson and Hugh Kilshaw onto the council so we are back up to a full complement. Or we were until today, when I received a resignation; so watch out for notices of how to apply for the vacancy.

Our assistant to the clerk, Bernise retired in January; Sallyann, who has come to replace her, has settled in incredibly well and we are all glad to have her on board. Lynn, our super clerk, is thankfully with us – just on holiday this week. The death of our custodian Frank came as a great shock. We will be looking to recruit a new custodian but in the meantime councillors are volunteering to cover some of his duties.

Councillors all bring different skills and interests. Before the council can make decisions there is a great of research to be done; other activities need skills ranging from IT, to tree planting, to drafting legal documents, and a myriad of others. There is remarkably little disagreement and lots of teamwork. (If you've never been to a parish council meeting, it isn't at all like the Vicar of Dibley but good, reasoned discussion and decision-making!)

Hugh, as our by far and away youngest councillor, is helping the council find ways of being more in touch with younger residents – watch this space for a Parish Council Instagram account and more. And thank you for being photographer tonight.

Last September we had an Away Day – an opportunity to meet outside of the council framework and discuss ideas not on the monthly agenda. Some of the outcomes have been:

- the first ever Parish Council entry for the Mortimer Scarecrow Trail (you may remember the Councillors on the Bus outside the library), built by Dave Kilshaw, Graham Bridgman, Heath Geary;*
- meetings with chairmen/vice chairmen/clerks of other parish councils in the ward;*
- the Art Competition you have heard about earlier this evening; and*
- the holding of informal surgeries for residents to speak to councillors. These are being organised by Heath Geary and will take place on the Tue evening and Saturday morning immediately before a full council meeting – see website for dates.*

Negotiations with WBC Highways resulted in improvement to the pavement on The Street from Kiln Lane to Pitfield Lane. Hoped for further improvements from the pedestrian lights back up the hill have proved not to be possible.

The long-awaited cycleway and footpath to Burghfield was finally granted planning permission just before the end of 2023. Work continues to secure the conditions of the permission, on formulating the leases between the Parish Council and the landowners, and to gather information enabling us to go to tender for construction. David Butler is heading up the liaison with our project manager and Graham Bridgman is working on the legal aspects.

The Parish Council has continued to engage with the Royal British Legion to push forward to a resolution on the future of Garth Hall. Seven councillors have worked on this as well as some non-councillor residents, with Nick Carter, Mike Dennett and Graham Bridgman having most engagement.

The Fairground and Cemetery Committee, headed up by Steve Hill is always busy. The normal management of trees, grass, fences and gates is a big

task but they found time for some new projects:

- the design of the cemetery extension has been finalised and we are in the process of going to tender for the landscaping construction; many thanks to Andy Noonan for tremendous input into this project.*
- planning permission was applied for and eventually obtained for CCTV on The Fairground. This has now been installed and will provide useful evidence should incidents occur; hopefully it will act as a deterrent.*

A new path to enable children from before school care to walk safely and drily from the Community Centre to school and an attractively fenced hard-standing square for the Christmas tree will be constructed soon.

Our Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee, under Amanda Marsden, is co-working with Greening Mortimer to look at improving our green credentials. As part of the Parish Council's green objectives, Michael Shaw is assessing our commons for biodiversity. This will all contribute to best management practice going forward.

You have heard from Mike Dennett about the work undertaken to record and deter speeding in the village using the SID and the ASWC. I thank him, John Wells, and other councillors and volunteers who undertake this work.

Under our community grant we have given small (up to £1,500) grants to Mortimer Cricket Club, The Oaks Childcare CIC, the new Table Tennis Club. Mortimer Scouts, Mortimer Methodist Church, Daisy's Dream Charity, Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau, and are looking to provide a contribution towards the cost of delivering emotional health and well-being workshops at St John's and St Mary's schools.

We have recently applied for the foundation stage of the Local Council Award Scheme. Andrew Richardson has developed and collated the information for this. The scheme pinpoints any areas of our operation which can be improved so we can become an even better council! He also scrutinises all our financial dealings and policies with a very experienced eye.

You may know that parish councillors undertake to sit on various other bodies as trustees or members, helping various local organisations to function.

Having at different times in the past undertaken most of these roles, I would like to mention:

- *Neighbourhood Plan: Amanda Marsden, Nick Carter, Graham Bridgman*
- *Clarke's Education Foundation: Nick Carter*
- *Stratfield Mortimer Relief in Need: Mollie Lock*
- *Wokefield Common Advisory Committee: Mollie Lock and Michael Shaw*
- *St John's Hall Management Committee: Michael Shaw*
- *Burghfield and Mortimer Volunteer Bureau: Andy Noonan*
- *Neighbourhood Action Group: John Wells and Graham Bridgman*
- *AWE Local Liaison Committee: Graham Bridgman*

This year I've got away with just being a Trustee for the Fairground Trust, but the list shows the wide contribution made by councillors to the running of local groups.

This year has seen the Parish Council undertake a major review of all our policies. This has been done with great thoroughness, mainly by Heath Geary and Graham Bridgman. We now have policies which are up-to-date with respect to national and local legislation, totally consistent and beautifully formatted!

This report has given a flavour of some of what the council has been up to. We exist to serve the village and I hope you will feel that we do."

Danusia Morsley

Annual Parish Meeting 2024

A very well attended Annual Parish meeting was held at St John's Hall on 29 April (the draft minutes are available on the Minutes tab of the SMPC website).

As a departure from previous years, refreshments including wine and beer were on offer, courtesy of SMPC, and we had interesting displays around the hall, and representatives from, the Mortimer Local History Group, Mortimer Walking Group, Mortimer Table Tennis Club, the Patient Participation Group, Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau, and regarding the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan .

In the meeting itself we had presentations about the programme to build a new hospital from Alison Foster, and about speeding in the village and sewage discharges from Cllr Mike Dennett, plus the award of prizes in the My Mortimer Art Competition, the presentation of the 2024 Community Award, and finally the annual report from the Parish Council.

(Articles about all of these are elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Danusia Morsley

2024 Art Competition

An innovation for the Parish Council this year was an Art Competition for children, with the results announced, and prizes awarded, at the Annual Parish Meeting. The competition set the theme of "My Mortimer" and there were three categories – each for a range of School Years.

All the entries showed a very positive view of Mortimer.



Years 7 – 13

This category was won by Alice Thomas with a very well composed and executed view of the Fairground pond and war memorial.

Years 3- 6

This category was won by Alice Prime with a colourful portrayal of many elements of the Mortimer street scenes.

The judges commented on the motto “Happiness is near in Mortimer” at the centre as a something we could all take to heart!



Years R – 2

The youngest category was won by Naomi Attoe-Martin with a delightful picture of her enjoying the Mortimer playground to the full.

Danusia Morsley

2024 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award



At the Annual Parish Meeting we were delighted to make a presentation of the Community Award for 2024 to **Doug Overett**, and to give a public honourable mention to **Chris Morsley**.

I chaired the selection panel and can do no better than quote directly from the nomination putting Doug forward for the award.

"As Chairman of the Mortimer Village partnership Doug has been in the thick of village life for many years. He is the facilitator, and very much hands on, for such events as the scarecrow trail, village theatre, spring clean and whole village events such as the fun day and jubilee and coronation celebrations.

Doug is always around to help out a events such as lunch club, bags2school, creation and distribution of the MVP newsletter plus being facilitator for the MVP Facebook page and also website input. In fact there is probably very little that Doug is not part of. It would be wonderful if Doug received recognition both in a personal capacity but also as Chairman of the MVP so that everyone who supports MVP in whatever capability can receive recognition too."

Without revealing how many individuals were put forward for the award, I can certainly say that it was a difficult, and close, decision between Doug and Chris Morsley. Chris is also a stalwart of village life and, again quoting from the nomination, *"is an unsung hero of the village... involved in so many things"*.

Graham Bridgman

In Memory of Frank Stansfield, 1961 - 2024

Having lived all his life in Mortimer, Frank Stansfield's knowledge of the village, coupled with his ability to turn his hand to almost anything, made him the ideal choice for the post of Village Custodian when he began to work for the Parish Council in November 2013. To say that we were all shocked and saddened to hear the news of his death is a massive understatement.

Frank was an invaluable member of the Council team - he maintained the various council sites to a very high standard, was resourceful in fixing broken and damaged property, and could be trusted to deal with almost anything that cropped up day-to-day. According to family members, this was reflected in his home life too - he had the tools and knowledge for making practically anything from wood or metal (I am reliably informed that he even made working steam engines from scrap pipes!).

Just the other day, a member of the public commented to me how much Frank was liked and, modest as he was, I think Frank would be surprised to know how many people in the village thought so highly of him, and were saddened at his passing.

Down to earth, practical, and dependable, Frank's presence around the village and on the Fairground (invariably very early in the morning and come rain or shine) shall be greatly missed.

In memory of Frank, the Council is looking to install a bench in the grazing area on the Fairground with a plaque acknowledging his contribution to village life. We know that many would like to contribute and make it a joint memorial from the council and the village - should you wish to do so, donations can be made by electronic transfer to the Council's bank account:

Bank name: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Sort code: 608301

Account number: 20321086

Please give "Frank" and your name as a reference.

Lynn Hannawin, Clerk

Mortimer to Burghfield Footpath and Cycleway

This project progresses, albeit slowly!



Work to discharge the conditions of the planning permission is being undertaken, in particular a dormouse survey required to ascertain whether there are any present along the route which would mean we have to take special precautions during building.

Danusia Morsley

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



Reserved Land

The land behind St John's School, which has been reserved within our current Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the school and a doctors, is being reviewed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure the policy it is fit for purpose.

Mortimer residents will no doubt recall the public consultation meetings at St John's Hall in 2022 that included an update on the reserved land, and led to a formal review of the NDP by SMPC to bring the land occupied by Redwoods (behind the school) into the equation, with the intended construction of 20 homes for over 55s giving the commercial backing for an extension of the land available (and, importantly, adjacent) to the school.

Feedback from West Berkshire Council following a planning enquiry by the developer about the proposals, and a changing commercial landscape, has led to further discussions between T A Fisher and the Steering Group, meaning that further revisions may need to be made.

Any major changes to the reserved land proposals will be publicly consulted upon.

The New Neighbourhood Plan

Thinking longer term, the Steering Group is continuing to develop the new Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan (NP) on behalf of our community. With our current NDP approaching 8 years old and running to 2026, the new NP will have updated policies that will influence any planning applications for future development within Mortimer.

The development of the new NP has taken the ideas and comments from community feedback, and compared them against the draft West Berkshire Local Plan (currently undergoing public examination – see the WBC website for details and videos of sessions) and National Planning Policies. With most of the new policies now drafted, we are bringing in professional support to help with developing our plans for future housing design codes and to help us draft the formal version of the NP.

The steering group meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Methodist Church. The meetings are always open to anyone from Mortimer who would like to join in - even if it's just for one meeting. Agendas for, and Minutes from, each meeting are uploaded on to the Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan website: <https://np.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/>.

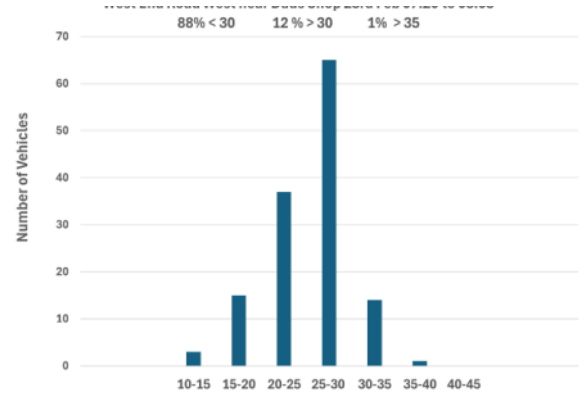
Jo Emberson-Wines



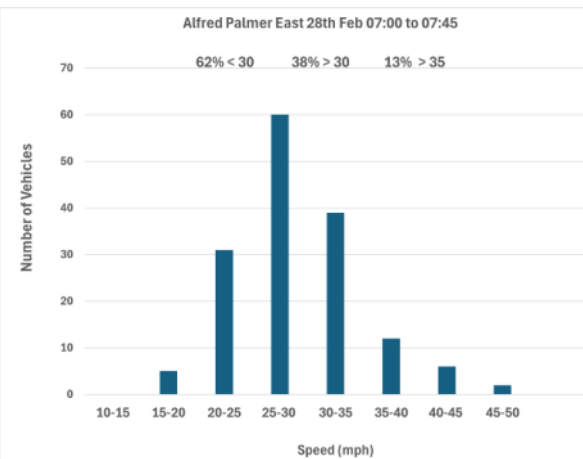
Speeding in Mortimer

Volunteers and Parish Councillors have continued to monitor speeding in the village using the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and the Automatic Speed Watch Camera (ASWC).

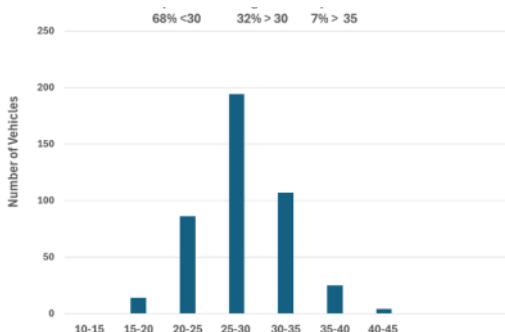
SID is used to inform drivers of their speed and encourage them to slow down if they are going too fast. SID also records the number of vehicles in 5mph bands over 5 minute periods. The speed recorded is that first detected and it records every passing vehicle. Some recent data are shown below.



Traffic travelling westwards out of the village opposite Dad's shop early morning. Total vehicles 135 with 15 above 30 mph and only 1 over 35mph

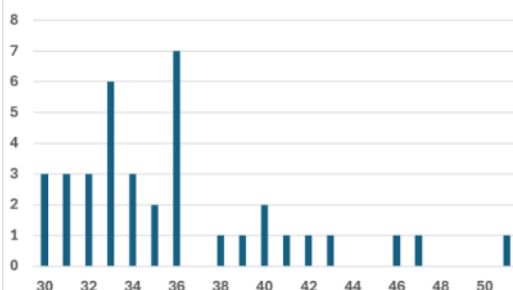


Traffic travelling eastwards into the village at Alfred Palmer early morning. Total vehicles 156 with 59 above 30 mph and 20 over 35mph.



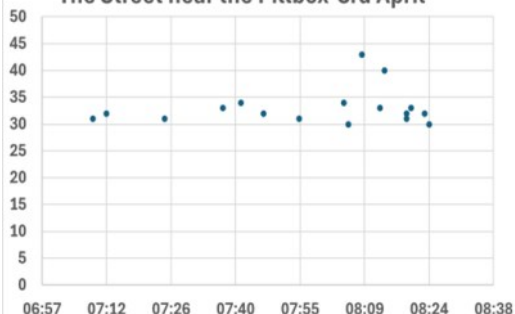
Traffic travelling eastwards down The Street early on a school morning.
Total vehicles 430 with 136 above 30 mph and 29 over 35mph.

NUMBER AT EACH SPEED
West End Road going out of village 4th April 07:20 to 08:40



Here, the ASWC recorded the speed of vehicles at 30 mph and more in West End Road going out of the village early morning. 73 vehicles at 30 and more with 17 reported to Thames Valley Police.

Speed mph vs time
The Street near the Pillbox 3rd April



This is an example of the ASWC stopping drivers speeding. Traffic going east down The Street, out of the village near the junction with Mortimer Lane. In about 90 minutes in the early morning, 407 vehicles passed but only 17 were at 30 or more.

We need volunteers for both SID and ASWC

- More people will mean more deployments, and this will reduce speeding.
- Training and operation are simple, with deployments flexible to suit you.
- Always two operators, so you will not be alone. **Please contact The Clerk.**

Mike Dennett

Storm Discharges into Foudry Brook from the Mortimer Sewage Works

Discharges at Mortimer Sewage works are becoming more frequent and occur for a substantial portion of the winter. Storm discharges should pass through a screen (6 mm by 6 mm mesh) to remove large items, but the discharges do contain untreated sewage.



This photograph was taken on 27 March 2024, 200m downstream of the discharge point.

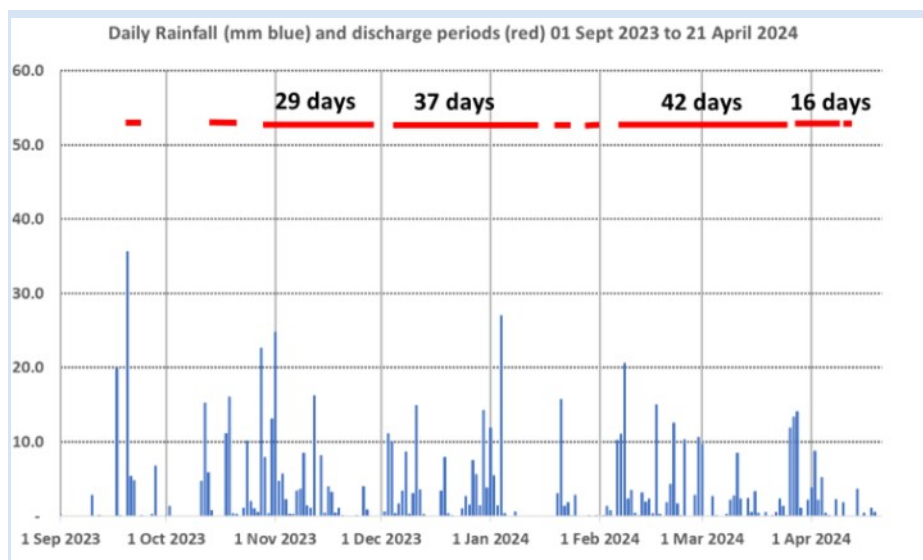
Not the clear chalk stream that Foudry Brook should be!

To some extent, we are fortunate with our geography and we have not had raw sewage on our streets as has happened recently in other parts of West Berkshire.

The times of discharge are recorded by Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) equipment.

The figures below show daily rainfall (mm) from 1 September 2023 to 13 April 2024 (data kindly provided by Dr Stephen Burt FRMetS) with periods of discharge shown in red. Discharges occurred for long periods. Short breaks of an hour or so have been ignored in producing the chart below.

The EDM data is recorded in minutes. From 28 October 2023 to 13 April 2024 the discharge duration totalled **200,505** minutes. That is equivalent to **139** days and is **83 %** of the time period.



The Environment Agency produces Annual Reports by calendar year for all storm discharges in England and Wales. Data were extracted for Thames-Water and sorted by duration of discharge for 2022 and 2023. Out of almost 700 discharge points, Mortimer Sewage Works had the second highest total period of discharge in both 2022 and 2023. Results for 2023 are shown below.

Rank by hours (700 sites)	Site	Received by	Hours	Spills
1	FAIRFORD STW	RIVER COLN	3391.00	162
2	MORTIMER (STRATFIELD MORTIMER) W	Foudry Brook	3304.25	150
3	STEWKLEY WASTEWATER TREATMENT	HARDWICK BROOK	3168.25	162
4	CLANFIELD WWTW	HALFACRE BROOK	3156.00	150
5	CIRENCESTER WWTW	SHORNCOTE DITCH	2870.75	166
6	BURGHFIELD WWTW	CLAY HILL BROOK	2861.00	132
26	SILCHESTER WWTW	SILCHESTER BROOK	2067.00	112
153	READING SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS	FOUDRY BROOK	289.75	24

(Note that 3304 hours is equivalent to 137.7 days.)

Burghfield and Silchester Sewage Works are also high in the rankings — also the case in 2022, with Silchester 5th worst and Burghfield 10th worst.

Silchester Brook flows into Foudry Brook and Reading Sewage Works also

discharges, though less often, into Foudry Brook.

The Parish Council obtained flow rates (daily and every 15 minutes) of the treated discharge from the main sewage outlet at Mortimer. Legally, the volumes of the main outlet must be measured but this does not apply to the storm discharges. Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) is a community group formed to challenge Thames Water about discharges in Oxfordshire. They analysed the daily flow data and concluded that Thames Water were probably breaking the conditions of their storm discharge licence. Discharges should not occur while the main outflow is discharging less than a certain value, known as Flow to Full Treatment (FFT). FFT was never reached in 2022, yet there were numerous discharges.

The Parish Council analysed the 15 minute flow data for November 2022 during a month long storm discharge. For much of the time, the main outlet was discharging between 25 and 30 litres per second. The FFT value is 35 litres per second and this was never achieved in any 15 minute period. It appears that the works are not capable of discharging at their consented capacity.

The Parish Council has written to Thames Water, the Environment Agency, West Berkshire Council and Sir John Redwood MP raising these and many other points. We also asked about the plans to upgrade the sewage works, which was originally planned to be completed by December 2023.

Thames Water have recently replied “ *we deem your request to be complex and therefore need to extend the deadline a further 20 working days (to 12th June)*”.

The Environment Agency reply included these statements: “*Thames Water have plans to carry out improvements at the site, but these have been delayed and we do not believe that any work has been done on them yet. The local Land & Water Environment Officer intends to carry out further inspections at the site in 2024 to gather further information on the state of the site and will then use our regulatory powers to require the remediation of any*

breaches of permit. Additionally, Mortimer sewage works is in a groundwater impacted area, meaning that the foul sewers within the catchment are receiving excessive amounts of groundwater infiltration that arrives at the sewage works unnecessarily. The local Land & Water Officer also intends to work with Thames Water during 2024 to locate significant sources of groundwater. These may be defects in the Thames Water sewer network that require repair and relining or potentially sources of water ingress from flooded private land or groundwater from private domestic sewers that are not the property of Thames Water. "

(This article contains part of a presentation given at the Annual Parish Meeting on 29 April. The full presentation is available on the SMPC website at https://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/sites/smpc/files/2024-05/Foudry%20Discharges_APM_2024.pdf)

If you wish to read more, a detailed report on the discharges was considered by the Full Council at its meeting in November 2023 and this was included with the letters referred to above. You can find it with the meeting papers under Minutes at <https://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/sites/smpc/files/2023-11/23-089%2010.1%20Storm%20Discharges%20into%20Foudry%20Brook.pdf>

Mike Dennett



Building Berkshire Together (the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the New Hospital Programme)

The key presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting was by Alison Foster, the Programme Director of Building Berkshire Together.

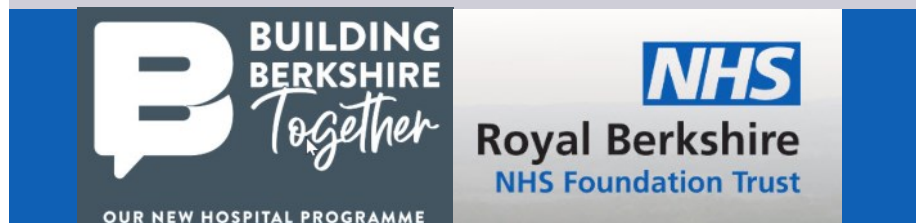
She told us that the New Hospital Programme (NHP) was a Government initiative to build or refurbish chosen hospitals utilising economies of scale in building new healthcare facilities to the 'Hospital 2.0' standard - using standardised design techniques, centralised processes and modern methods of construction (eg modular construction, etc). The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT) was placed on the NHP in October 2019 and is in "Cohort 4", but since then 5 additional hospitals - with urgent RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) issues - have been added to the programme, which means that RBFT's redevelopment has been pushed back.

Alison then told us that the RBFT Board had made a decision regarding its preferred way forward, which is to build a new hospital on a new site. There were a number of reasons for this, relating to the constrained nature of the existing site, potential difficulties in planning, and issues with the ground state below at least some of the existing hospital buildings. One example was that Hospital 2.0 required taller floors (eg to accommodate equipment) meaning that connecting old buildings to new buildings would be problematic, single rooms rather than multi-bed wards, etc.

Two particular new sites had been subject to initial due diligence - Thames Valley Science Park (Shinfield) and Thames Valley Park (the north end of the A3290) – but others might come forward. There would be a lot of factors involved in any decision (transport links, impact on staff, etc), let alone the overarching question as to the cost and financing any firmed-up proposals (with meetings with the Treasury imminent).

Alison assured everyone that however the project moved forward, there would be continued engagement with patients, the public, stakeholders, and the communities served by the hospital. She encouraged anyone interested to visit <https://buildingberkshiretogether.co.uk> for more information and to be involved in the process.

Graham Bridgman



Life as the new Assistant to the Clerk

I joined the Parish Council as Administrative Assistant to the Clerk back in February after a 30-year career in IT and Customer Service - I was looking for something different and a role where I could feel part of the community, and I think I've found it!

I have really enjoyed my time so far, and Lynn and the councillors have been very welcoming and supportive. In taking over from Bernise I had some big shoes to fill, but Bernise has popped in a few times to show me the ropes and the intricacies of this unique job - every day is different, and the work is very varied.

Following on from Lynn's update in the Spring newsletter, filing is still taking a backseat as the office is very busy! However, we are planning a week in August for an annual audit when we shall hopefully get to grips with outstanding jobs (well, that's the plan anyway...).

I am looking forward to start studying for the Introduction to Council Administration (ILCA) - although I have to confess that I nearly signed up for the Welsh version which would have made for a very entertaining course!

I have already met some of you and look forward to meeting others as parish life progresses.

Sallyann Taylor

Bridging the Gap: Parish Council Surgeries

In the heart of our community, the Parish Council recently held two successful surgeries, building on the dialogue opened after the inaugural surgeries I wrote about in the last edition of this newsletter. Their objective is to better engage with residents to address local concerns and foster a collaborative spirit.

The first surgery took place in the welcoming ambiance of the Mortimer Bistro, while the second in the convivial setting of the Horse and Groom – our grateful thanks to both locations for allowing us to host these sessions on their premises. These will be ongoing locations (see regular times/dates below) and are an important way for the Council to understand and action the needs of our parish.

Engaging with the Community: While few residents attended specifically to speak with us, we were able to speak to a range of people. They were eager to discuss the progress on projects and express their concerns on various issues affecting their daily lives:

- **Garth Hall:** Councillors provided an update on the progress towards the transfer of the trust and potential restoration efforts, ensuring that this building might continue to serve as a hub for community events.
- **Tower House Farm:** Councillors provided information on the use of the reserved land, as well as the status of planning. We reassured residents that the Council were monitoring future plans to ensure that village amenities were being prioritised.
- **Speeding, A Nightly Concern:** Speeding, particularly at night, was raised as a safety concern. Councillors heard accounts from residents of extreme speeding witnessed at night. This is something the Council will explore to establish the scale of this problem alongside existing activities (see the Community Speedwatch update) we're doing to ensure our roads are safer.
- **Overgrown Hedges:** Overgrown hedges were reported as an emerging problem after the growing season had begun. While seemingly trivial, this can severely impact pedestrian safety and the street appeal of our village. The Council is working with property owners to manage their hedges responsibly.
- **Escalating to District – Footpath Maintenance:** Some issues are beyond parish responsibility, and the maintenance of local footpaths is one of these. The Council is taking steps to escalate a reported footpath maintenance issue to ensure that public pathways remain safe and navigable for all.

Future Surgeries – A Commitment to Continuous Dialogue: The Parish Council surgeries are more than just meetings; they are a commitment from your Parish Council to an ongoing conversation with the community.

Future surgeries will be held regularly as follows:

- First Saturday of the month at 10 am in the Bistro
- First Tuesday of the month in the Horse and Groom at 7 pm

Please mark these in your calendars! They are open to all, and the Council encourages every resident to consider attending and sharing their thoughts for the betterment of our village. Councillors will then report and discuss the topics discussed at the next Full Council Meeting on the following Thursday.

We are grateful for all participants for their invaluable input and look forward to more fruitful discussions for the future versions of these.

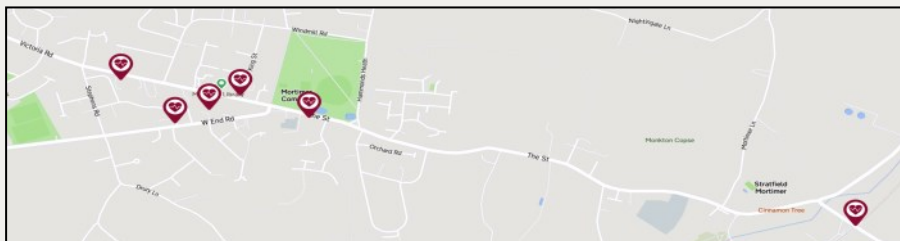
Heath Geary

Defibrillator and CPR Familiarisation

In response to recent comments on Facebook, our First Responders, Tom Maynard and Emma Gripton, ran some free defibrillator and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) familiarisation sessions at the Methodist Church on 14 May.

There was a great response and 17 people attended. Attendees were given the opportunity to learn more about defibrillators and CPR, and understand how to access defibrillators in an emergency.

Great Western Railway having recently installed one at Mortimer Station, there are now six public defibrillators in the village – four provided/adopted by the parish council: outside the surgery, outside Sansome & George in West End Road, in the telephone box on the corner opposite the Co-op, and outside the Horse & Groom; one at the Fire Station provided by the Fire & Rescue Service; and the one at the station.



In an emergency, please dial **999** and you will be directed to the nearest InService defibrillator.

The Parish Council would like to thank Tom and Emma for running these sessions for our community.

Sallyann Taylor

Four Houses Corner

The somewhat controversial application to replace the permanent pitch Gypsy caravan site at Four Houses Corner (which is within the parish of Stratfield Mortimer) was finally decided on 6 March, after three meetings of the West Berkshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee (one of which was cancelled after a last minute objection by Thames Valley Police) and a public consultation event organised by WBC at St John's Hall in December.

Following representations by various parties, including PC Andrew Harper's mother, Mrs Deborah Adlam, and this parish council, the committee decided to grant planning permission, but noted the strong concerns expressed about the number of individuals who would be resident (since each of the 17 new pitches would be able to contain one mobile home and one touring caravan), the need to ensure that tenancy agreements were enforced, and regarding future management of the site being a key issue (WBC have said that rather than seek to manage the site themselves once it is rebuilt, they will engage specialists in the field of managing Gypsy and Traveller sites to do so).

There are currently (at the time of writing) two applications before WBC to discharge planning conditions relating to drainage and construction methods which will need to be decided before work commences.

Graham Bridgman



Garth Club

There have been two applicants to take over the Trust relating to Garth Club that have passed the initial vetting procedure set by the current trustees, The Royal British Legion (RBL) – *Mortimer Hobby Hall & Repair Café* and *Royal Berkshire Boxing*.

Initially there were concerns expressed by RBL's advisors about accessing the building due to its condition, but viewings were subsequently arranged.

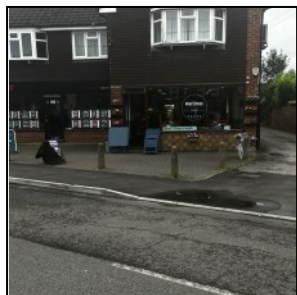


The next step at the time of writing, which should have concluded by the time you are reading this, will be meetings (on 6 June) between RBL and each applicant to discuss their proposals in detail - Graham Bridgman and I will be sitting in on those meetings as observers on behalf of the Parish Council.

Nick Carter

Victoria Road Restored Pavement

In February, the pavement outside Mortimer Café/David Cliff in Victoria Road was restored. The work was done to address a long-standing hazard to pedestrians, notably the disabled and those with pushchairs, caused by cars parking in what appeared to be a layby but was in fact part of the footway.



The work followed a successful West Berkshire Council member's bid (an annual matched funding scheme that uses contributions from house builders to pay for up to half the cost of local infrastructure projects) by me as a District Councillor, with the other half of the funding coming from the Parish Council.

Since the work's completion, cars are generally parking on (or mostly on!) the road, leaving the pavement safer for pedestrians.

Nick Carter

Outside Bodies

The latest in our series of articles about the external bodies that the Parish Council appoints members/representatives relates to the Atomic Weapons Establishment's Local Liaison Committee.

AWE Local Liaison Committee

The LLC brings together representatives from local authorities in Berkshire and Hampshire including West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, and the various parishes in the vicinity of the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites (together representing around half a million residents).

The LLC meetings provide members with an overview of AWE operations, updates on site management, development plans, and emergency planning, together with details of AWE's environmental, and health and safety, performances. Representatives of AWE's independent regulators – the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Environment Agency – also attend the meetings, giving updates on performance and progress (these bodies also produce a summary performance report, which is shared with members at the meetings and published on their websites).

Members also get updates about AWE's community programmes and are encouraged to submit agenda items of interest to their local communities.

Meeting minutes are published on the AWE website, and questions from residents are welcomed - these can be sent to an LLC member (in SMPC's case, me) or to the LLC secretary via its community email address: communityandschools@awe.co.uk.

Graham Bridgman

Trees on Parish Council Land

We are lucky to have so many trees in the parish. They don't necessarily need much maintenance but some work is needed from time to time.

In 2011, the Council planted an avenue of lime trees (the temperate tree, not the citrus fruit!) along the southern border of the Fairground. They replaced an avenue of horse chestnuts which were suffering from several invasive diseases (bacteria and fungi) and pests (leaf miners). Limes are

attractive, fragrant, trees and most of those planted did well. However, last year, almost exactly halfway through the spring leaf expansion, all the leaves on one tree died within a few days of each other. This pattern of complete, sudden, death is very unusual for a tree newly infected with a disease and it is hard to see how an environmental factor would affect just one tree. We decided to replace the dead tree, and a couple of others adjacent and to the east of the dead tree which had poor growth, with the tough, native, unrelated, hornbeam tree. The replanting took place during late April. Without having found a clear cause we can only hope the disease or disorder will not recur, and we have gambled on a reasonably wet summer (!).

There is better news about the fruit trees planted last year by volunteers from Incredible Edible in the west of the conservation strip. All have survived; just one has been damaged and resprouted from the rootstock.

Last year three pines in Windmill Common were felled because they were dangerous. The consultant suggested that – as part of a continuing programme – saplings of native trees such as oak or beech (or possibly yew, lime or hornbeam) be selected from the area and replanted. We expect this small-scale felling with replanting of appropriate species to continue gradually over time. The idea is that a varied age structure will develop which will support an equally varied biota, in line with the increasing biodiversity envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan.

As for brand new trees, the planned extension to the cemetery is intended to contain an *Amelanchier* (also known as snowy mespilus), providing attractive spring and autumn foliage, reasonable size, spring flowers, and autumn fruit for birds.

Michael Shaw



SMPC MEETING CALENDAR 2024-2025

JUNE

Tue	04	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	Planning Committee	6.45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	20	Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	27	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

JULY

Thu	04	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	11	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	11	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	25	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

AUGUST

Thu	08	Planning Committee (<i>if required</i>)	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	22	Planning Committee (<i>if required</i>)	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

SEPTEMBER

Thu	05	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	12	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	12	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	19	Fairground & Cemetery Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	26	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

OCTOBER

Thu	10	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	10	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	17	Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	24	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

NOVEMBER

Thu	07	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	14	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	14	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	28	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

DECEMBER

Thu	05	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	12	Planning Committee (<i>if required</i>)	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

JANUARY

Thu	02	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	09	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	09	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	16	Fairground & Cemetery Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	23	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

FEBRUARY

Thu	06	Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	27	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

MARCH

Thu	06	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	13	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	27	Planning Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall

APRIL

Thu	10	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	10	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	24	Planning Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Mon	28	Annual Parish Meeting	7.30pm	St John's Hall

MAY

Thu	01	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu	08	FULL COUNCIL (Annual Meeting)	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

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

Tel: 0118 933 1955

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): Telephone 01635 519080

Email: streetcare@westberks.gov.uk

District Councillors for Burghfield & Mortimer Ward:

Cllr Nick Carter - Nick.Carter2@westberks.gov.uk

Cllr Geoff Mayes - Geoffrey.Mayes1@westberks.gov.uk

Cllr Vicky Poole - Vicky.Poole1@westberks.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCILLORS (contact details on website)

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



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