

STRATFIELD MORTIMER PARISH COUNCIL

Newsletter—Summer 2025



Introduction and Parish Council news

This edition

As ever, a warm welcome to this edition of the SPMC newsletter which I hope you find interesting and useful – to follow anything up, or to contact the Parish Office or any of your Parish Councillors, please see the details at the back of this edition or on the SPMC website.

Parish Council news

At the Annual Parish Council meeting on 15 May - not to be confused with the Annual Parish Meeting a week earlier – we dealt with a number of annual housekeeping items.

I was elected as the Parish Council Chairman and Dave Kilshaw was elected as Vice-Chairman. Danusia Morsley, Steve Hill and Andrew Richardson were elected as the Chairmen of (respectively) the Community, Estate Management, and Planning & Highways Committees, and we also agreed the membership of the different committees, and made appointments to various Steering Groups and outside bodies.

Danusia Morsley

A few words about Danusia's contribution to the Parish Council, and our community, over the last two years as Parish Council Chairman.

In simple terms, she has been an excellent Council Chairman, building on the work of Mike Dennett and her other predecessors. Having worked closely with her as Vice-Chairman, I know the time and effort she has put in to the role – she deserves everyone's thanks for a job superbly done!



Graham Bridgman

Front Cover

The cover photograph shows The Hurst Singers at our VE day commemoration on 8 May.



Councillor John Wells

John sadly and unexpectedly passed away on the 22nd February 2025. At his wake on 19th March and on behalf of the Parish Council, Councillor Mike Dennett paid this tribute to John's contributions to the Council.

'The council is very grateful to the family for this opportunity to pay tribute to John.'

About 2017 John started attending Parish Council meetings as a member of the public. He would often ask relevant questions and he always listened throughout the meeting.

We appreciated the interest that he was taking and the view of many councillors was "we need Mr Wells to become Councillor Wells". It was excellent news when he successfully stood for election in 2019.



His first meeting as a councillor was May 2019. This was the annual meeting of the council that elects the Chairman and Vice Chairman and appoints members to committees. John was straight in the thick of things, being appointed to the Planning Committee, the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee and to the Garth Hall Working Group. He remained on these bodies throughout his time on the council.

At that meeting, I was appointed Chairman. So, I had four years of keeping John in order at Full Council meetings. This was never a problem, rather it was a delight. John would not speak unnecessarily but when he did it was concise, to the point, well-argued and his contributions were said with polite but determined conviction.

It was also clear that John was always prepared. He had read all the papers and knew what the debate was about – something I don't think I could always say about some other councillors.

Danusia Morsley, the current Chairman, gave me these words:

"John was always cheerful and polite, even if he didn't agree with the way a parish council discussion was going. His contributions to debates were always very apposite, based on long local knowledge and a logical approach

to everything. He had a clear understanding of what he could contribute and never failed to do so.

When we had Awaydays and talked about things other councillors might not know, he told us about his interesting career and spoke with great pride about his family."

John enjoyed the Awaydays but was amused and politely sarcastic about the title. Where did we go? To the scout hut on Alfred Palmer, all of 300 yards for John.

Councillors are summoned to meetings and expected to attend. During John's time on the Council he was summoned to 172 meetings. He attended 164 and gave apologies for the other eight.

In his first three years he only missed one meeting. More recently, the last meeting he gave apologies for was back in January 2024. A truly superb attendance record.

The Planning Committee is particularly onerous as it meets twice a month throughout the year and typically comments on 40 to 50 planning applications per year. John contributed enormously to this committee. His local knowledge, his understanding of planning law and his eye for detail were tremendous assets and much appreciated by the committee.

Another area in which John contributed significantly was in road safety and speeding. His specialised knowledge was invaluable in acquiring our speed camera and speed indicator device. Lynn, our Clerk for nearly all the time John was on the council, found John particularly helpful in general. She also very much appreciated his inputs into the Community Speed Watch programme and the installation of CCTV on the Fairground.

John was a keen participant in Councillor Surgeries. These were set up relatively recently with the aim on engaging with the public and John played a full part in these.

Finally, one councillor commented on John's sartorial style of belt and braces. To us, this reflected John's attitude, things could always be done one way or the other and he would find a solution.

So, John we thank you for all your contributions to the council and the community and for the pleasure it was to have you on the council for five and a half years. We shall greatly miss you.'

Annual Parish Meeting

The Stratfield Mortimer Annual Parish Meeting was held in St John's Hall on 28th April, and well attended, despite the competition from the talk by Lord Arbuthnot about the Post Office scandal at the library!

This year we returned to a more traditional format for the meeting, including a range of presentations from local organisations.

After a brief introduction from me as chairman of the meeting, we started with the children's art competition.

Art Competition

I was very pleased to present prizes to the winners in the competition to portray '*Mortimer Past or Future*'.

The first prize was awarded to Florence Jourdan-Brown for her picture featuring St Mary's Church (see right).

Highly commended prizes went to Minnie Giles, Penny Giles and Alice Prime.



Community Award

Graham Bridgman, who chaired the selection panel, had the pleasure of announcing that the 2025 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award had been awarded to Chris Morsley.



Graham said that Chris had made long-standing and wide-ranging contributions to the community including 20 plus years as an assistant cub master; driving (in turn) for the Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau, Newbury & Thatcham Handybus and Burghfield & Mortimer Handybus; being the quartermaster and organising Fun Day logistics for MVP; and organising the delivery of MVP and SMPC newsletters.

I then had the great pleasure of presenting the award plate to my husband!

Reports from Local Organisations

We then had a series of short reports from local services and organisations.

Thames Valley Police

PC Robert Hubbard-Clark told us of the recently increased police presence in the local area. He also spoke about local crime data; there had been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour but a significant reduction in burglaries. He urged residents to report all incidents to TVP, using 999 for emergencies, and 101 or one of the online contact forms at www.thamesvalley.police.uk for non-emergencies.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Watch Manager Daniel gave us an update on the operation of Mortimer Fire Station. Monday evening is their regular drill night and residents are welcome to come and observe. They asked everyone to be vigilant with the wildfire season starting, often either from arson or discarded glass bottles.

When reporting a fire he recommended the What3Words app which is a free app for your mobile phone that gives a pinpoint location of, for example, a fire you report through 999. As you can imagine, that will get the fire engine there quicker!

(Both the Police and Fire Service reminded us that they offer home safety checks on request.)

Hills Quarry

A new subject for the APM was the talk given by Frank from Hills Quarry, with a detailed description of how the quarry process on Welshman's Road works. They are a family-run business and their output (after on-site washing, etc) includes stone, sharp sand and ballast mix. Although the majority of their product is supplied to a few fairly local companies, they can also cater for smaller individual customers directly on site.

The operation is very mindful of their ecological impact, and a comprehensive regeneration plan will be implemented when extraction is completed in around 2030.

AWE

This was followed by an entertaining talk given by Bryan Lyttle from AWE debunking some myths about their operations - they don't have a "red button" to launch a bomb (!); they only test components, not whole war-heads; there is no operational nuclear reactor on site; the radiation levels at the perimeter of both the Aldermaston and Burghfield sites are well below average for the UK, and less over a whole year than a single dental or chest X-ray; and the underground railway connecting the sites is a figment of our imaginations!

Mortimer Schools Federation

Craig Hassey, Chair of the Mortimer Schools Federation, gave an update based on the recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. The glowing report highlighted among other things the embedded Christian vision, rich curriculum nurturing spiritual and ethical development, and excellent support for pupils with special educational needs.

Mortimer Village Partnership

Doug Overett, Chairman of MVP, reported on its activities, all aimed at enriching village life. Forthcoming events include: a return to the traditional format Fun Day on July 5th, a Call my Bluff wine tasting event in September, and the regular autumn half term Scarecrow Trail with a theme of Mortimer Goes Potty with all entries to be made of flower pots.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Jo Wines and Doug Overett gave an update on the new Neighbourhood Plan (reported elsewhere in this edition). A planning application is expected shortly from TA Fisher for the reserved land to provide playing fields and staff parking for St John's School, a new dental surgery for Oak-tree Dental Practice, and 25 housing units suitable for residents to down-size.

Annual Report of Stratfield Parish Council

We concluded with my report about SMPC activities over the year—an abbreviated version of which will be found on the next pages.

Danusia Morsley

The Annual Report of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

As referred to above, at the Annual Parish Meeting on 28 April, I gave a report of SMPC's activities over the previous year. It is rather too long to be included in full here, but can be found on the SMPC website as part of the draft APM minutes.

In brief, I reported as follows:

- Last summer Jay Sylla took over the role of Village Custodian following Frank Stansfield's death – he is doing a great job.
- On 6 June last year we joined the country in marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day with the lighting of a beacon, and on 8 May we would have the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.
- At the end of 2024 we said good bye to Lynn Hannawin who as clerk (and assistant clerk before that) had kept the Parish Council running smoothly for many years - we have been very fortunate to find Danielle Davis as her replacement. Danielle and Sallyann make a great team in the office.
- We are running monthly meetings – Coffee with a Councillor on a Saturday morning in the Bistro, and a Pint with a Councillor on a Tuesday evening in the Horse and Groom – see the article elsewhere in this newsletter.
- During the year we have lost three councillors, one being John Wells - John was a Mortimer man born and bred; a much-respected councillor and we miss his presence and contributions.
- We have welcomed two new councillors quite recently: Jayne Todd and Ryan Saunders and look forward to working with them.
- The council is actively engaged with WBC re parking along The Street near St Mary's School (but WBC needs to undertake public consultation to add new yellow lines).
- We are overhauling the structure of the council with three new committees:
 - the Estate Management Committee is taking on the Commons and various other bits of land we look after;
 - the role of the Planning & Highways Committee should be self-explanatory;

- the new Community Committee will deal with all aspects of community involvement (the newsletter, website, surgeries, community grants and the community award) and also explore how it can support the many not-for-profit groups in the village to make Mortimer even better.
- We have updated the majority of our policies.
- We have been awarded the Foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme – we aim to work towards further levels in the future.
- After a great deal of effort, work on the cemetery extension is about to start, including a memorial wall where plaques can be placed for those whose ashes have been scattered elsewhere.
- Work on the cycleway to Burghfield continued all year - slow responses from WBC Highways at several points have caused further delays, but we are creeping closer to preparing tenders for the construction.
- Under our Community Grant scheme we have given small grants to Mortimer Music Live, Mortimer Table Tennis Club, Mortimer Pre-School, Mortimer Warm Welcome and The Oaks Childcare Club.
- A footpath to enable everyone, especially children, to walk from The Street to the Community Centre avoiding the carpark was completed during the winter, along with the new utility square. This is used for the Christmas tree and beacons as required by the Council but we also encourage suggestions from the public as to ways it can be used throughout the year.
- With the support of District Councillor Nick Carter we have received match funding from WBC for the installation of a lockable water supply in the centre of the Fairground which can be made available to hirers of the Fairground - it will be in place in time for this year's Fun Day.
- We are supporting Fun Day by sponsoring the headline arena act, *Pedal Power v Parkour*.
- Through Mike Dennett we have continued to monitor the discharges from the Thames Water Pumping station.
- Mike has also led the work in monitoring speeding in the village through our SID and ASWC. The purchase of further devices to deter speeding is in the pipeline.

- Along with Burghfield and Sulhamstead Parish Councils we have recently given notice withdrawing from an agreement with West Berkshire Council which required us to contribute more than £15k per annum to the running of Willink Leisure Centre. The Parish Council felt there are better ways to spend that money.
- The Precept we set for the financial year 2025/2026 means that a Band D house will pay less this year than in 2022.

Danusia Morsley

Parish Cemetery Extension



Work on the extension to the cemetery has commenced and is progressing well, with huge thanks to Jim Bryce for allowing access to White Horse Contractors via his adjacent field.

The site has been cleared and levelled, the bridge from the current cemetery installed, and the new paths dug and constructed.

At the time of writing, the foundations for the memorial wall have been laid along with the reinforcing – the walls remain to be built and the new tree to be planted.

For information, those who have a right of interment (as a burial or the interment of cremated ashes) in either the existing parish cemetery or the new extension (when it comes into use) are residents at the time of death of the civil parishes of Stratfield Mortimer and Wokefield, or former residents of one of those parishes who died elsewhere and who had lived in one of the parishes, either within the five years prior to death or for at least 20 years during their lifetime.

Graham Bridgman

Community Grant Fund

The Parish Council has put aside a fund to provide grants of a maximum of £1,500 each to locally focused 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 fund will be open to applications from 1 September, with a closing date of 30 September (applications outside this application period won't be considered) and application forms are available online or from the office at any time.

Short-listed applicants will be invited to a meeting of the SMPC Community Committee in mid-October to present their submission and answer any questions, with an announcement about the successful bids shortly afterwards.

As in previous years, and in the words of our Community Grant Policy, "the award of any grant shall be at the Committee's sole discretion and based on the merits of the application, eligibility criteria, and the funds available – for the avoidance of any doubt, the Committee is not obliged to award a grant just because an application has been made" (and where there are competing applications for our funds it is likely that priority will be given to new projects).

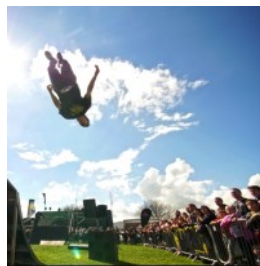
Danusia Morsley

Fun Day

The Parish Council is pleased to announce that it is sponsoring the 'Pedal Power vs Parkour' headline act at the MVP Fun Day on 5 July.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Sallyann Taylor



Willink Leisure Centre

As reported at the Annual Parish Meeting on 28 April, SMPC - in conjunction, and following discussions, with Burghfield and Sulhamstead Parish Councils - has opted to withdraw from its agreement with West Berkshire Council regarding the Willink Leisure Centre.

A series of agreements since 1990 - between the parishes, Berkshire County Council and Newbury District Council (and subsequently the school) - set up the (then) Recreation Centre and required each parish to make an annual payment based upon the number of electors in its parish if there was a deficit. In return, the parishes were to be involved in running the centre.

(When Berkshire County Council was abolished in 1998, West Berkshire Council became the other contracting party.)

Each agreement has included a provision for any of the parties to walk away upon (a) 12 months' notice, and (b) payment of a sum (based on the annual payment) to the other parties. Following formal resolutions by all three parishes, there was a joint withdrawal by notice from the most recent (1996) agreement to WBC on 11 April.

The rationale for the decision was set out in the joint notice:

"While there has been general dissatisfaction with the management of the Leisure Centre, the principal reason for this joint decision is that the annual payments under the Agreement have become entirely disconnected from any direct involvement in its management. When the first of three principal agreements (dated 29 March 1990, 1 April 1996, and the Agreement) was originally entered into, the Parish Councils played an active role in running the Centre, including employment of staff. However, since the Agreement superseded the earlier arrangements, the Parish Councils have been reduced to financial contributors, with no meaningful input into its operation, despite increasing financial obligations.

"Each Parish Council believes that the significant sums currently allocated to the Agreement would be better utilised for the direct benefit of their respective parishioners."

SMPC's contribution in the financial year 24/25 was £15,076 (10.1% of its precept) and accordingly SMPC has paid an additional £15,530 as the withdrawal fee.

The parishes are open to discussions with WBC and a meeting has been proposed for mid-June.

Andrew Richardson

Neighbourhood Plan

We are now over three years into the project to produce a new plan to replace the existing NDP covering the period of, and running alongside, the WBC Local Plan (2026 to 2041) - it is fair to say it has been challenging work for a very small team, with much of the heavy lifting being done by three or four people.

Unlike the previous NDP we are not (at least presently – things may change as the Government's new housing targets start to take effect) being required to take any additional housing. Thus, perhaps understandably, the general interest from parishioners has been low, but it is still important to have local planning policies, especially if a further housing requirement comes our way.

We have been working to refine the new plan in a number of key policy areas including:

- The Natural Environment;
- Highways & Transport;
- Employment, Facilities & Services;
- Community Energy;
- Climate Change & Resilience.

We have reached the stage where external consultants (paid for by HMG) have completed some technical reports for us and provided a health check on the work done so far.



There is still a lot to do, but we anticipate having a report completed towards the end of the year for consideration by the community, following which the draft plan will be submitted to WBC for an examiner to review. Everything is planned to then culminate in a local referendum next year as to whether to adopt the final product of our endeavours.

Jo Emberson-Wines, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Meet Your Councillors - A Growing Community Initiative

It's great to report that our Parish Council surgeries are becoming increasingly popular!

Surgeries, or 'Meet Your Councillors', provide a valuable platform for residents to share their ideas, views, and concerns. These sessions are essential for the Council to understand the community's needs and act on them to make the village a better place to live.



As a reminder, they are held twice each month, with the dates advertised on the SMPC website, and on our noticeboards and elsewhere. They are a welcoming environment where everyone is encouraged to participate.

Each month there will be a surgery at the Bistro on a Saturday morning at 10 am, and then at the Horse and Groom on the following Tuesday evening at 7 pm (in the months where there is a full meeting of the Council these occur in the week before the meeting, helping us to hear views quickly and act where possible).

Last month it was great to hear ideas on making the village greener and more environmentally friendly and listen to views on traffic and speeding. We heard reports some anti-social behaviour, so provided a bit of support to affected residents and signposted them to the Burghfield and Mortimer Neighbourhood Action Group. We also had two visits from residents simply to express their appreciation for the work we do for them. Thank you all for paying us a visit!

Your Councillors are all approachable and friendly, so it should be easy for residents to have a chat, whether you have specific issues to raise or simply want to connect with your local representatives. These informal gatherings help foster a sense of community and ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Remember to look out for our banners!

The dates for upcoming parish council surgeries are 12 July (Bistro at 10 am) and 15 July (Horse and Groom at 7 pm); and 9 August (Bistro at 10 am) and 12 August (Horse and Groom at 7 pm) - please look out for our posters advertising them, and future dates, on the SMPC noticeboards, and on the Council's website.

The growing popularity of the surgeries indicates the community's desire to be involved in local decision-making and contribute to the village's development.

Heath Geary

Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of VE Day in the UK

Victory in Europe (VE) Day, celebrated on 8th May 1945, marked the end of World War II in Europe. This year, the UK commemorated the 80th anniversary of this historic event with a series of nationwide activities and local events, reflecting on the sacrifices made and celebrating the peace that followed.

National Commemorations

The 80th anniversary of VE Day was marked by a range of national events. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport organised a comprehensive program that included a service at Westminster Abbey, a flypast, and a concert. Schools across the country participated in educational activities to ensure that the legacy of VE Day is passed on to future generations.

Stratfield-Mortimer's Special Event

In our village, the parish council organised a special event to commemorate this significant anniversary.

The event took place on the Fairground, opposite the Horse and Groom pub, and featured a variety of activities designed to bring the community together in celebration and remembrance, starting with the ringing of the bells at St John's Church at 8.30 pm. The sound of the bells served as a poignant reminder of the joy and relief felt by millions when peace was declared in 1945.

As the bell ringing ended, we had the sound of an air raid siren signalling the all clear, followed by the Hurst Singers a mix of traditional and contemporary songs, adding a musical backdrop to the evening.

Lighting of the Beacon

As evening fell, and after a few words from Graham Bridgman to reflect, as he put it “a commemoration of profound significance for the United Kingdom”, at 9.30 pm we lit a beacon – a symbolic act as part of a nationwide initiative, with beacons being lit across the UK to represent the light of peace that emerged from the darkness of war. The beacon lighting was a moment of reflection and unity, bringing together people of all ages to honour those who fought for freedom.



Community singing

Alongside the lighting of the beacon, the community had the opportunity to join the Hurst Singers in singing "I Vow to Thee, My Country". This patriotic hymn, set to the music of Gustav Holst, has long been associated with national pride and remembrance. The collective singing was a powerful expression of gratitude and solidarity, echoing the sentiments of those who lived through the war.

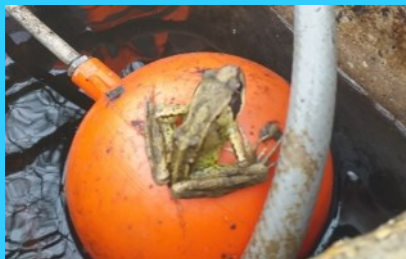
A Day of Reflection and Celebration

The 80th anniversary of VE Day was not only a time to remember the past but also to celebrate the peace and freedoms enjoyed today. Events like ours provided a chance for communities to come together, share stories, and reflect on the values of service and sacrifice that defined the wartime generation.

Heath Geary

Bringing Water to the Fairground – A New Project

We are delighted to announce that, following a successful Member's Bid via Cllr Nick Carter (meaning that the cost of the project is split between SMPC and West Berkshire Council), a new water supply has been installed within the Conservation Area on the Fairground, with a spur to supply a standpipe within the SMPC compound adjacent to the Tennis Courts.



This new supply (secured in a lockable standpipe box) means that, alongside improving the maintenance of the Fairground, events on the Grazing Area (for example Fun Day) will have a convenient access to water without having to trail hoses across public areas.

During an initial site visit it was a lovely surprise to discover a small family of frogs making their home in the water trough—a charming reminder of the importance of preserving and supporting local wildlife as we improve our shared spaces.

Danielle Davis

A Warm Welcome in Mortimer

Earlier in the year, the Parish Council was pleased to award a grant to Mortimer Warm Welcome—a community group that opens its doors every Friday morning from 9:30 to 12:30 at Mortimer Methodist Church.

This warm and welcoming initiative offers a friendly space for residents of all ages to enjoy a cuppa, delicious homemade cakes, and good company. Visitors can take part in arts and crafts, puzzles, card games, and even occasional chair exercise sessions. It's a wonderful way to connect with others and brighten up the week.

Our Parish Clerk, Danielle, and Assistant Parish Clerk, Sallyann, recently visited the group and experienced the warmth and hospitality firsthand. It was a delight to see such a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere in the heart of our village.

We'd like to thank the dedicated volunteers who make Mortimer Warm Welcome such a valuable part of our community. If you haven't been yet, why not pop in one Friday—you'll be sure of a warm welcome!



Danielle Davis

Brightening Up West End Road Car Park – A Community Planting Project



On Friday 12th April, a fantastic team of volunteers from Greening Mortimer and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council came together to give the West End Road car park a green makeover!

The group fully weeded the car park and planted a brand-new border along the west side with 58 pollinator-friendly, drought-resistant plants supplied by Englefield Garden Centre and purchased by the Council. The aim of the project is to improve the car park's appearance while also supporting biodiversity

by creating a space that attracts and benefits bees and other pollinators.

The planting choices were made with sustainability in mind—requiring minimal maintenance while offering long-lasting visual appeal throughout the seasons.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who gave up their time to help. It's a wonderful example of what can be achieved when the community works together to enhance and care for our shared spaces.

Danielle Davis



New Councillors

Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed Jayne Todd and Ryan Saunders to our ranks – Jayne was co-opted in March, and Ryan in April.

Jayne Todd

Jayne told us: *“Now that we have settled into Mortimer with a view that this is our forever home, I am keen to become fully integrated within my own community. Whilst I am sure that I could achieve this by participating generally in village life, I do feel that where someone can help make a positive difference they should at least try.*

Being on the Parish council seems like it would be “Win, Win”, I get to share my skills and knowledge for the good of my community and in return I get an opportunity to continue my own growth and learn from others.”



Jayne's career has been mainly in the corporate arena, both here in the UK and in Australia. In her early career she worked in the Recruitment and Human Resources, becoming a specialist in TUPE (Transfer Undertaking and Protection of Employment), with a strong emphasis on transformation, and reaching the level of Human Resources Director.

She has also been a CEO within the technology industry, with over 3,000 employees during a period of instability and significant change, and has started, run, and sold a hospitality business.

She is now a lecturer in Leadership and Change for one of the largest private education companies in the world.

Ryan Saunders

Ryan was already very well known to a number of parish councillors as a key member of Mortimer Music Live, and as its current chairman. He has been an active participant in local events since the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012, including various Fun Days, the late Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations in 2016 and Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and the King's Coronation the following year.

For those of you who remember *Moulin Mortimer* (and who present could forget it?!), that was Ryan's brainchild!



Ryan is fully involved in the preparations for the upcoming ABBA Revival concert which will follow Fun Day on 5th July and hopes to see you there!

Alongside MML he is active in supporting events organised by Burghfield Santas – he is the person who organises the music production for Burghfest and is heavily involved in the Box Cart Bash.

Prior to all of this, he was the youngest governor at The Willink, where he contributed during a challenging budget period and played a key role in establishing a media policy for the school.

Professionally, Ryan runs a locally based production company that specialises in music television and documentaries. His work takes him around the globe, meeting fascinating individuals to share their stories, and working with many very well-known names in music. He is partly responsible for the BBC's BAFTA award winning Glastonbury coverage, and has directed a number of television music programmes, including ITV's late-night Studio Sessions. He frequently finds himself in a television truck (most recently outside the Royal Albert Hall).

Graham Bridgman

Vacancy for a Parish Councillor

A Casual Vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council following the death of Councillor John Wells.

Are you passionate about Mortimer and want to help shape its future? Becoming a Parish Councillor is a rewarding way to get involved in your community.

What's the role about?

Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers who work together to make decisions that impact local services, facilities, and the future of the village.

You don't need any special qualifications—just a bit of time, enthusiasm, and a genuine interest in making a difference.

What will you be doing?

- Attending Parish Council meetings.
- Contributing towards making decisions on local issues.
- Helping to manage local facilities such as playgrounds, sports areas and commons.
- Engaging with residents, businesses, and local authorities.
- Supporting and delivering local projects and initiatives.

Are you eligible?

Provided you are not disqualified from holding office (a range of criminal convictions, having a bankruptcy restrictions order, etc), you must be aged 18 or over, and a British, Commonwealth, Republic of Ireland, or EU citizen. You must also fulfil at least one of the following criteria:

- being on the electoral register for Stratfield Mortimer;
- living in, or within 3 miles of, the parish for the last 12 months;
- having your principal place of work in the parish;
- having occupied land or premises in the parish as a tenant or owner for the last 12 months.

How to apply

For a discussion about this voluntary role or to ask for an application form, please email the Clerk at the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk.

If you're ready to make a positive contribution to our community we'd love to hear from you!

Danielle Davis



In Memory of Alan Thorpe

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is deeply saddened by the recent passing of Alan Thorpe, a long-standing and much-respected member of our community.

Alan made Mortimer his home in 1969 when he became Headmaster of St Mary's Junior School, a role he held until his retirement in 1989.



Mortimer was fortunate to have been chosen over Chester, where Alan had also been offered a prestigious role leading a new teachers' centre. His choice benefited hundreds of local children and families, and he often fondly recalled the school's proudest moment—winning the All England 5-A-Side Football Championship at Wembley in 1985, as a result of which the team were invited to Windsor Castle to meet Queen Elizabeth II.

Soon after arriving in the village, Alan joined the Parish Council. He went on to serve as a District Councillor from 1980 to 2000, during which time he held a number of key positions including Chairman of Planning, Vice-Chairman of Education, and Chairman of the Council. In recognition of his outstanding public service, Alan was appointed an Honorary Alderman in 2012.

Following his time on the District Council, Alan returned to the Parish Council, where his thoughtful contributions and dry wit were always appreciated. He officially retired from the council in May 2014 after decades of dedication to Mortimer. That July, he was presented with a certificate of thanks by the then SMPC Chairman, Cllr Mike Dennett, at the village Fun Day.

Alan's legacy in Mortimer is lasting. His dedication to education, governance, and community spirit has left a mark on generations of residents. He will be remembered with great respect and gratitude.

Our thoughts are with Alan's family and friends at this time.

Danielle Davis/Mike Dennett

SMPC MEETING CALENDAR 2025-2026

JUNE

Thu 12	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 26	Planning & Highways Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

JULY

Thu 03	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 17	Planning & Highways Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 17	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 24	Estate Management	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 31	Community Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall

AUGUST

Thu 07	Planning & Highways Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 28	Planning & Highways Committee	6.45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 28	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall

SEPTEMBER

Thu 11	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 18	Planning & Highways Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

OCTOBER

Thu 09	Planning & Highways Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 09	Estate Management Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 16	Community Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 30	Planning & Highways Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 30	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall

NOVEMBER

Thu 13	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 20	Planning & Highways Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 27	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall

DECEMBER

Thu 11	Planning & Highways Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
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JANUARY

Thu 08	Planning & Highways Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 08	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 15	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 22	Estate Management Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 29	Planning & Highways Committee	6.45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 29	Community Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

FEBRUARY

Thu 19	Planning & Highways Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 26	Finance & General Purposes Committee	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

MARCH

Thu 12	Planning Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 12	FULL COUNCIL	7.30pm	Methodist Hall

APRIL

Thu 02	Planning & Highways Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 16	Estate Management Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 23	Planning & Highways Committee	6:45pm	Methodist Hall
Thu 23	Community Committee	7:30pm	Methodist Hall
Mon 27	Annual Parish Meeting	7.30pm	St John's Hall
Thu 30	Finance & General Purposes Committee	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: 07436 807543

Email: 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: 07436 807543

PARISH COUNCILLORS

To contact a Parish Councillor please see our website

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

West Berks Council: 01635 551111 (inc out of hours emergencies)

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

