



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, 17 West End Road, Mortimer, RG7 3TB on Thursday 8 January 2026 at 19:30

Present

Members

Cllrs G Bridgman (Chairman), N Carter, H Geary, S Hill, D Kilshaw, D Morsley, K Strong and J Todd.

Other Councillors

None.

Officers of the Council

Danielle Davis.

Public/Press

There was no members of the public or press in attendance.

Commencement

The meeting commenced at 19:30.

Part I

25/070 To receive any apologies for absence

All Members present.

25/071 To receive any declarations of interest

None received.

25/072 Public Questions

None.

25/073 Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Thursday 27 November 2025 were received with no amendments and approved with one abstention for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

25/074 Chairman's remarks

The Chairman reported that:

- A discussion had taken place regarding the action tracker and the importance of ensuring that matters raised at meetings, where an action is required, are clearly minuted and then recorded in the tracker (even if they are likely to be completed by the next relevant meeting). Committee Chairmen are responsible for checking that any actions arising from their meetings are added to the tracker.
- The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr J Allen to seek confirmation of the committees she wishes to join.

25/075 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received.

The Committee congratulated the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk on the timely completion of their CiLCA qualification.

25/076 Items to be taken into private session

Not needed.

25/077 Items for consideration

1 Policies

To consider any Policies within the ambit of the Committee requiring consideration, amendment or proposal to Full Council.

a Communications – to note to be discussed in Community Committee;

This was noted.

b Data Protection and Information Technology Policy v0.2 (new Policy to replace CCTV Policy, Data Protection Privacy Notice, and Record Retention Policy, plus part of Financial Regulations relating to passwords, etc);

Following a discussion regarding the potential use of covert cameras, it was agreed that, subject to an amendment to include reference to the potential use of covert cameras, the policy would be recommended to Full Council for adoption at the meeting on 15 January 2026.

c Financial Regulations v8.1 (reflecting changes detailed above);

d Freedom of Information Policy v1.2 (new Policy to replace FOI Access to Information Policy, FOI Freedom of Information Publication Scheme and FOI Publication Scheme Declaration);

e Policy Guidance and Glossary v3.1 (changes consequent on other Policies plus introduction of 'Core Policies' and edited Personnel Policies);

#Cllr Strong left the room at 19:50

Agenda items 25/077.1.b to .e were taken en bloc, after consideration and, following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Bridgman that the policies would be recommended to Full Council. Cllr Geary seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

#Cllr Strong re entered the room at 19:54 (and so was not included in the resolution for agenda items 25/077.1.b to .e).

f Personnel Policies – to note change in approach in Policy Guidance and Glossary (above), and that these are to be discussed by Personnel Sub-Committee.

Cllr Bridgman commented that with regard to the policies currently held as private 'personnel' policies that, (a) all needed review anyway (having been adopted in 2023), (b) some included references to volunteers, parishioners, etc, so should be public, and (c) some had overlapping references to very similar processes (appeal etc) which could be consolidated.

He was developing a single Personnel Policy with detailed Personnel Protocols included as appendices, which it is intended should be made publicly available. This work will be undertaken with the assistance of the Clerk and Cllr Geary (who had been involved in the original drafts).

Following a further discussion, Cllr Bridgman commented that, with the revised etc policies referred to above, we were getting to the point where all policies had been through a re-drafting process, and moving into a review phase. He intended that, apart from those policies subject to a statutory annual review (where the version number was being changed to the year in question), each policy should be reviewed on a staggered three-year cycle to spread the workload.

2 Budget 2026/27

To receive the draft budget and approve it for presentation to Full Council on the 15 January 2026.

The draft budget and precept were considered.#

It was agreed that the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Steering Group budget would be increased to £50,000, of which £20,000 would be raised through the precept (as currently accounted for in the draft), with the balance funded through year-end transfers from earmarked reserves (EMRs) and general reserves.

It was further noted that the tax base figure had reduced from that previously provided by West Berkshire Council, and the Clerk was requested to investigate this.

Cllr Bridgman proposed that the budget and precept of £171,433 be recommended to Full Council for approval at the meeting on 15 January 2026.

Seconded by Cllr Morsley

Resolved unanimously.

25/078 Finance

1 Accounts to 30 November

To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure Report to 30 November and the Balance Sheet as at that date.

The reports were received and noted.

2 The Public Sector Deposit Funds (TPSDF)

To note the return on investment as at 30 November 2025.

The return on investment as at 30 November 2025 was noted as being 4.05%.

25/079 Items for information only

Cllr Kilshaw informed the Committee that tenders for the Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway would be opened on 16 January. He advised that a decision would need to be made, in conjunction with the Clerk, on the appointment of a contractor in order

to enable tree works to commence before 31 March, in accordance with the arboriculture statement.

Cllr Kilshaw further reminded the Committee that the planning permission for the scheme would expire in the summer if works had not commenced.

25/080 Minor matters (if any)

Cllr Hill raised concerns regarding the content of the Pizza Press hire agreement resolved on 27 November. In accordance with Standing Order 86.5, he requested the support of one half of the members present plus one to re-debate the matter at the Full Council meeting on 15 January.

Five members supported the request, and it was therefore resolved that the decision would be re-debated at the Full Council meeting on 15 January.

It was further agreed that Cllr Carter would contact the Licensing Department at West Berkshire Council to follow up on the street trading licence for Pizza Press.

25/081 Communications

None.

25/082 Future agenda items

None other than standard identified.

Close

The meeting closed at 20:28

Date of next meeting: 15 January 2026

Miss Danielle Davis

09/01/2026