



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 12 March 2026

at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer, RG7 3TB

Present

Members

Cllrs D Backhouse, G Bridgman (Chairman), N Carter (arrived at 19:33), S Child, M Dennett, H Geary, S Hill, M Lock, D Morsley, K Strong, and N Williams.

Officers of the Council

Miss D Davis.

Public/Press

There were three members of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

Commencement

The meeting commenced at 19:30

#A minute's silence was held for former Councillor Mr S Beard.

Part I

25/110 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Allan, Kilshaw, Saunders and Todd.

25/111 To receive any declarations of interest

To receive from Members at this point, or at any point during the meeting, in respect of any items included on the agenda, disclosure of any interests, and/or gifts and hospitality, in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

Cllrs Bridgman and Hill declared a non-pecuniary interest due to their involvement in the planning of the Transport Through the Ages event. No other declarations were made.

25/112 Public Questions

- Representatives from the Transport Through the Ages event attended to outline the background to the event, which previously raised £10,000 and aims to raise a similar amount this year for charity. They explained the event has a budget of approximately £7,000, creating financial risk for the organisers, and asked whether

the Parish Council could provide financial support. It was suggested that the request be considered by the Community Committee at its meeting on 23 April, and that the organisers provide further details, including the acts planned. The organisers were invited to attend that meeting, where the matter will be listed on the agenda. They also asked whether the Parish Council would like a stall at the event; this will be considered by the Community Committee.

- A resident raised a query regarding the installation of the new Fairground Fence and the removal of a stile near the zebra crossing and asked whether it would be reinstated. It was noted that the stile had previously been reviewed due to safety concerns about children running from the field onto the road, but the Council had been under the impression it would be replaced.

Action: The Clerk will raise the matter with the contractors for clarification.

25/113 Minutes of last meeting

To approve the Minutes of the Full Council meetings held on 15 and 29 January 2026.

The Minutes of the Full Council meetings held on Thursday 15 and 29 January 2026 were received with a minor amendment and each approved for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting in question.

25/114 Chairman's remarks

- The Chairman reported that correspondence had been received regarding Local Government Reorganisation and an invitation to respond to the consultation. Councillors discussed whether the Parish Council should submit a response, noting the tight deadline of 26 March. Some councillors indicated they may attend a related meeting on 18 March; the Clerk will confirm the location and circulate details. Discussion also included the proposed headquarters location and potential issues relating to Tilehurst.

Action: The Clerk to obtain details of the meeting on 18 March and circulate to councillors.

- The Chairman also proposed starting discussions about producing the annual printed newsletter in June, following the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Council. It was agreed that the newsletter should not duplicate articles already included in the monthly news bulletin.

25/115 Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was received.

25/116 Items to be taken into private session

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

Cllr Bridgman proposed that items 25/120.1 Governance and Management Risk Register, 25/120.2 Asset Register, 25/120.3.b Personnel Matters, and 25/120.5.b Fees and Charges 2025/26 be taken in Part II. Cllr Geary seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

25/117 Changes to Bodies or Body Membership

Cllr Bridgman proposed Cllr Williams to join the Burghfield to Mortimer Cycleway Steering Group, seconded by Cllr Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

25/118 Policies

1 To consider any new Policies and/or agree/note any Policy amendments, including:

a Asset Valuation Policy v2026 - to note;

The changes were noted.

b Policy Guidance and Glossary v4.1;

c Health and Safety Policy v1.2;

d Scheme of Delegation v6.2;

e Communication policy v1.1.

Items 25/118.1.b to .e were considered en-bloc.

After some discussion Cllr Bridgman proposed that items 25/118.b to .e be approved en-bloc.

Cllr Hill seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

25/119 Reports from Committees, Steering Groups, Working Parties and Outside Bodies

1 To note the meetings that have taken place of the following committees and to receive the minutes/draft minutes, where available:

a Estate Management, 22 January;

b Planning and Highways, 29 January;

c Community, 29 January;

d Planning and Highways, 19 February;

e Finance and General Purposes, 26 February;

The minutes were noted/received.

2 Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Kilshaw was not in attendance. It was reported that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council appears to have concluded the stage of assessing representations. The next step is expected to be Regulation 19, at which point the Steering Group will review which sites are progressing and discuss next steps.

Cllr Geary attended two recent Basingstoke and Deane Cabinet meetings where Regulation 19 was mentioned, although not in detail. Cllr Geary will circulate a note of the meetings to councillors.

3 Neighbourhood Action Group report.

No meeting has taken place.

4 **Outside Bodies.**

It was reported that the Burghfield and Mortimer Volunteer Group is seeking additional volunteer drivers and operates a buddying system to help new volunteers feel more confident.

The St John's Village Hall AGM will take place on 25 March, and the Secretary will be stepping down after 35 years of service. The hall has also submitted its report relating to the Community Grant received.

25/120 Items for consideration

1 **Governance and Management Risk Register**

To receive the Risk Register as adopted by F&GP.

Minuted at Part II.

2 **Asset Register**

To receive the Asset Register (as at 31 March 2026) as adopted by F&GP.

Minuted at Part II.

3 **Personnel Matters**

a **To receive a verbal report on the Officers' end of year appraisals.**

The Chairman and the Clerk reported that appraisals had been conducted for all three Officers.

b **To resolve the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee via the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding scale point increases and contractual changes.**

Minuted at Part II.

4 **Annual Subscriptions and Continuous Payments**

To receive and resolve Annual Subscriptions and Continuous Payments as recommended by F&GP.

The addition of the Mortimer Village Partnership affiliation fee (£10 annually) was agreed.

With that addition, proposed by Cllr Bridgman.

Seconded by Cllr Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

5 **Fees and Charges 2025/26**

a **To consider the Community Committee's recommendation that charges for use of the Fairground be removed for small-scale regular community activities (eg children's sports or exercise classes), with charges retained for large-scale commercial events such as fairs and circuses.**

The Council considered the Community Committee's recommendation to remove charges for small-scale regular community activities at the Fairground, while retaining charges for large commercial events such as fairs and circuses.

It was suggested the matter should first be reviewed by the Estate Management Committee, as it had not yet considered the proposal. Discussion also included

whether fairs and circuses should be charged for the full period they occupy the site, not only the days they operate. Councillors also noted that if the site were free for small-scale activities, it could encourage greater community use of the Fairground through promotion of the space.

It was agreed the matter will be discussed by the Estate Management Committee and brought back to Full Council for resolution.

- b Under Standing Order 86, with the Chairman's agreement, and following correspondence from Mortimer Tennis Club, to reconsider the recent resolution (Estate Management Committee meeting on 22 January 2026) regarding the method of calculation of Fairground fees and charges.**

Minuted at Part II.

6 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

To receive and note the guidance on the financial year end and AGAR process.

The guidance was received.

7 Annual Parish Meeting

To receive an update and agree the arrangements.

The Chairman reminded everyone regarding the APM on 27 April and noted that the Clerk will distribute some flyers for the noticeboards advertising it. Cllr Bridgman proposed the same budget as last year (£250) for refreshments – Cllrs Kilshaw and Geary would be undertaking the purchasing. Cllr Morsley seconded. **Resolved** unanimously.

8 Draft Timetable

To approve the meeting timetable for 2026/2027 as recommended by Finance and General purposes.

Council considered the draft meeting timetable for 2026/2027, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

A suggestion was made to spread meetings across multiple evenings; however, the majority preferred meetings to remain on a single evening to keep other evenings free.

Cllr Bridgman proposed the resolution to approve the timetable (v9.4 of the circulated spreadsheet), Cllr Hill seconded.

Resolved by majority, one against.

25/121 Finance

(See appendix)

1 Accounts to the 28 February 2026

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 28 February 2026 and the Balance Sheet as of that date.

Cllr Bridgman proposed to approve the Income and Expenditure Report and the Balance Sheet as at 28 February 2026. Cllr Geary seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

2 Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure- Schedules Ai and Aii: **Report 25/121.1**

Not needed.

3 Payments made by Clerk in consultation with Chairman - to note

To receive and note a summary (Schedules Bi/Bii): **Report 25/121.3**

4 Regular or previously authorised payments made - to note

To receive and note a summary (Schedules Ci/Cii): **Report 25/121.4**

5 Transfers between accounts authorised by Chairman and Clerk - to note

To receive and note a summary (Schedule D): **Report 25/121.5**

Items 25/121.3, .4 and .5 were received and noted en-bloc.

25/122 Items for information only

1 District Councillor Report

The District Councillor's report was received. It was suggested that the report lacked detail. Discussion followed regarding the implementation of 20mph speed limits. It was explained that West Berkshire Council is generally only considering such reductions where residents submit petitions requesting them.

2 Correspondence: **Report 25/122.3**

None.

25/123 Action Trackers

To review the Action Trackers for the following committees:

1 Planning and Highways 25/123.1

2 Estate Management 25/123.2

3 Community 25/123.3

The Action Trackers were noted.

25/124 Minor matters

- A query was raised regarding posters and advertisements appearing on street furniture and trees in the village. While Parish Council policy allows for their removal, it was noted that enforcement can be difficult.
- It was noted that an item regarding Land at West End, Mortimer will be discussed at the next West Berkshire Council meeting; this will be passed to the Steering Group.
- An update was provided regarding the Pizza Press van. It was suggested that, under the lease with West Berkshire Council, the Parish Council cannot charge for its presence, including a peppercorn fee. The Clerk advised she had been seeking clarification from West Berkshire Council and will be provided with a contact to follow up by Cllr Carter.
- It was reported that the application seeking discharge of planning conditions relating to the cycleway will be chased.

25/125 Communications

To identify items for communicating if any.

The Annual Parish Meeting and photography competition were identified for promotion. Councillors also noted the ongoing monthly bulletin and discussed the potential for an annual printed newsletter.

25/126 Future agenda items

To identify specific future agenda items.

- None.

Part II**25/127 Exclusion of Press and Public (if needed)**

To pass a resolution under s.1(2), Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Cllr Bridgman proposed.

Cllr Hill seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

Part II**1 Governance and Management Risk Register**

To receive the Risk Register as adopted by F&GP.

The Risk Register was received and noted.

2 Asset Register

To receive the Asset Register (as at 31 March 2026) as adopted by F&GP.

The Asset Register was received.

3 Personnel Matters

a To receive a verbal report on the Officers' end of year appraisals.

Minuted at Part I.

b To resolve the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee via the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding scale point increases and contractual changes.

The recommendations were discussed (and it was noted that the Custodian is paid for any additional hours worked).

Cllr Bridgman proposed that the recommendations be agreed and Officer contracts amended accordingly.

Cllr Morsley seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

4 Fees and Charges 2025/26

- a **To consider the Community Committee’s recommendation that charges for use of the Fairground be removed for small-scale regular community activities (eg children’s sports or exercise classes), with charges retained for large-scale commercial events such as fairs and circuses.**

Minuted at Part I.

- b **Under Standing Order 86, with the Chairman’s agreement, and following correspondence from Mortimer Tennis Club, to reconsider the recent resolution (Estate Management Committee meeting on 22 January 2026) regarding the method of calculation of Fairground fees and charges.**

Councillors discussed the background to the rounding of discounted fees for the use of the Fairground, and the cumulative difference that had resulted from applying percentage increases to previously rounded figures. It was suggested that the percentage increase should have been applied each year to the previous year’s calculated fee without rounding, rather than the already rounded figure.

It was proposed that this should be the method of calculation in the future. For 2026/27 this would appear as a 0% increase for the year, reflecting the correction.

Cllr Bridgman proposed that Column T of the spreadsheet underlying the discussion be used to form the fees table. Seconded by Cllr Hill.

Resolved unanimously.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:18

Date of next meeting: **14 May 2026.**

Miss Danielle Davis

13/03/2026

Appendix – payment schedules

Schedule Ai

Item	Date of Invoice	Payee Details	Amount £
1.			

Schedule Aii

Item	Date of Invoice	Payee Details	Amount £

Schedule Bi

Item	Date of Payment	Payee Details	Amount £
		Electronic Bank Payments	
1.			
2.			

Schedule B ii

Item	Date of Payment	Payee Details	Amount £
		Electronic Bank Payments	
1.	19/01/26	Oliver Signs – Stop Building in Mortimer Correx Art work	360.00
2.	19/01/26	Dads shop: hooks inc VAT	8.54
3.	19/01/26	GB Sports and Leisure – Wet & Forget for MUGA	62.52
4.	19/01/26	Stocksigns – cables for AWSC	31.08
		Card Payments and Direct Debits	
1.	06/01/26	Amzn: Sharpies for B & D	13.45
2.	08/01/26	Amzn: USB Stick	11.58
3.	08/01/26	Amzn: A4 printing paper	27.66
4.	18/01/26	Mailchimp	40.61
5.	16/01/26	Amzn: Coffee for Office	34.95
6.	20/01/26	WBC Library room hire x 3	61.75
7.	20/01/26	Amzn: Keysafe box for Horse & Groom	27.98
Item	Date of Payment	Payee Details	Amount £
		Electronic Bank Payments	
1.	10/02/26	Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy	270.00
2.	10/02/26	Tactical: Adhoc waste collection – gas cannisters	24.00
3.	10/02/26	Dads shop inc VAT	11.39

4.	10/02/26	Mortimer Methodist Church: Hall hire January	225.00
5.	16/02/26	West Berkshire Council – West End Car Park – Dec 2024	10.00
6.	16/02/26	West Berkshire Council – West End Car Park – Dec 2025	10.00
7.	16/02/26	Tactical – gas cannister	12.00
Card Payments and Direct Debits			
8.	02/02/26	Lloyds: monthly card fee	3.00
9.	02/02/26	Canva – Newsletter February	31.00
10.	02/02/26	Canva – Newsletter February	31.00
11.	10/02/26	SP Nothing but Padlocks	110.20
12.	12/02/26	West Berkshire Planning Portal – Discharge conditions Cycleway	383.00
13.	17/02/26	Jotform Ltd Digital goods – Photo competition	23.40
14.	18/02/26	MailChimp	40.22
15.	24/02/26	Canva	58.50

Schedule Ci

Item	Payment Date	Payee Details	Amount £
Electronic Bank and Card Payments- January			
1.	30/01/26	Salaries: Month 10, Jan 2026 inc pension contributions	5281.95
2.	30/01/26	HMRC: PAYE & NI for Month 10 , Jan 20256	1600.03
3.	13/01/26	Fresh Pay: admin fee for Jan inc VAT	7.80
4.	19/01/26	David Sturt: Purple dragon IT services	260.00
5.	19/01/26	West Berkshire Office Rent Quarterly in Advance	875
6.	19/01/26	SCS: ground maintenance Dec & Jan inc VAT	814.40
7.	19/01/26	Mortimer Methodist: Hall hire Dec	50
8.	19/01/26	Tactical: Dog waste empty Dec inc VAT	145.61
Direct Debits- January			
1.	02/01/26	OVO: Electricity inc VAT	24.00
2.	02/01/26	OVO: Electricity inc VAT	33.00
3.	12/01/26	EE: mobile phone charges & WiFi hotspot	40.56
4.	23/01/26	OVO: Electricity inc. VAT	30.00
5.	30/01/26	Suez: Waste collection Aug inc VAT	106.56
6.	31/01/26	Unity Trust: service charge	10.65
7.	07/02/26	Smart pension: monthly admin fee inc VAT	26.40
8.	01/01/26	Google: DNS services	0.85
9.	22/01/26	Gigaclear: Monthly Fee	72.00
Item	Payment Date	Payee Details	Amount £
Electronic Bank and Card Payments- February			
10.	27/02/26	Salaries: Month 11, February 2026 inc pension contributions	5415.67
11.	27/02/26	HMRC: PAYE & NI for Month 11, February 2026	1712.86
12.	13/02/26	Fresh Pay: admin fee for Nov inc VAT	7.80
13.	10/02/26	28 across: Website support	2415.60
14.	10/02/26	CIA Fire & Security: SmartAccess Tennis Courts	890.40
15.	10/02/26	Tactical: Dog waste empty Nov inc VAT	145.61
16.	10/02/26	David Sturt: Purple Dragon IT Services	£130
Direct Debits- February			

1.	02/02/26	OVO: Electricity inc VAT	24.00
2.	02/02/26	OVO: Electricity inc VAT	33.00
3.	02/02/26	EE: mobile phone charges & WiFi hotspot	40.67
4.	23/02/26	OVO: Electricity inc. VAT	30.00
5.	27/02/26	Suez: Waste collection Nov inc VAT	117.11
6.	28/02/26	Unity Trust: service charge	10.65
7.	02/02/26	Smart pension: monthly admin fee inc VAT	26.40
8.	01/02/26	Google: DNS services	0.92
9.	23/02/26	Gigaclear: Monthly Fee	72.00

Schedule Cii

Item	Payment Date	Payee Details	Amount £
Electronic Bank and Card Payments- January/February			
1.	19/01/26	Infinity Playgrounds	10633.08
2.	10/02/26	RC Saunders Limited	79950.36
3.	10/02/26	Bell Cornwell	8070.42

Schedule D

Item	Payment Date	Payee Details	Amount £
Electronic Bank and Card Payments			
1.	16/01/26	Transfer from Public Sector Deposit Fund to Unity Trust	50000.00
2.	09/02/26	Transfer from Public Sector Deposit Fund to Unity Trust	70000.00