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 28 May 2026 at 18:45

Present

Members

Cllrs G Bridgman, S Hill, D Kilshaw, D Morsley

Other Councillors

None.

Officers of the Council

Danielle Davis.

Public/Media

There were no members of the public or media in attendance.

Commencement

The meeting commenced at 18:45.

Part I

26/001 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Todd.

26/002 To receive any declarations of interest

None received.

26/003 Public Questions

None.

26/004 Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Thursday 30 April 2026 were received with no amendments and approved unanimously for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

26/005 Chairman’s remarks

Cllr Bridgman advised that no substantial amendments had been made to the Fairground Policy and suggested that it be presented to Full Council in June. Cllr Hill, Chairman of the Estate Management Committee, agreed with this approach.

26/006 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was received and noted.

Discussion took place regarding Burghfield Parish Council's contribution towards the cycleway project and the possibility of this position changing following their meeting on 14 May. The minutes of the meeting were reviewed, and the Committee noted that a response from Burghfield Parish Council requesting further information was expected.

Cllr Hill queried whether West Berkshire Council would be contributing to the project. It was confirmed this related to the crossing works. Cllr Hill also asked whether Reading Borough Council could be approached for funding. The Clerk advised that contributions had been received from Sulhamstead and Wokefield Parish Councils, and thanks had been given. A grant application would also be submitted to Greenham Trust through The Good Exchange.

The Clerk raised concerns regarding photographs taken at the Annual Parish Meeting by Cllr N Carter, which had been edited to include advertising for a website he manages and could not be cropped for Parish Council publications.

26/007 Items to be taken into private session

Cllr Bridgman proposed that item 26-007 Report from Personnel Sub-Committee be taken into private session due to the confidential nature of the personnel matters to be discussed.

Resolved unanimously.

26/008 Items for consideration

1 **Policies**

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

Cllr Bridgman advised that he and the Clerk had reviewed all policies requiring minor amendments under the Clerk's delegated powers and that these would be updated accordingly.

It was agreed to recommend the Fairground Policy to Full Council on 11 June. The Advertising and Fly Posting Policy would be referred to the Community Committee.

Discussion also took place regarding proposed amendments to the Standing Orders. Members noted that the only substantive amendment related to formalising the process for chairing meetings in the absence of the Meeting Chairman, removing the need for a vote in such circumstances. It was proposed that the Chairman of the Council would chair the meeting, followed by the Vice-Chairman of the Council, with a vote only taking place if neither were available.

Further discussion took place regarding Part II business. It was noted that the Meeting Chairman would canvass views on items proposed for Part II, however a formal resolution to move into Part II would still be required in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

2 **Internal Audit Report**

To receive the Internal Audit Report for presentation to Full Council on Thursday 11 June 2026.

The Internal Audit Report was received.

3 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

To receive and consider:

a **AGAR Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 for presentation to full Council on 11 June 2026.**

b **AGAR Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26 for recommendation for approval by full Council on 12 June 2025**.

AGAR Sections 1 and 2 were approved to recommend to full Council.

The Committee noted that a formula correction to the Asset Register, previously approved by the Committee on 26 February 2026, had resulted in amendments to the Total Fairground Assets and Total Assets columns.

Cllr Bridgman proposed approval of the amended Asset Register, seconded by Cllr Kilshaw.

Resolved unanimously.

4 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return: additional documents**

To receive the following documents which will be submitted to the External Auditor:

a **Confirmation of Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights 2025/26.**

b **Bank Reconciliation as of 31 March 2026.**

c **Explanation of variances.**

d **Reconciliation between Box 7 and Box 8.**

e **Minutes of the meeting where the current internal auditor was first appointed showing the smaller authority considered the independence of the internal auditor**.

The documents were received.

5 **Personnel**

To resolve the appointment of further members to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

The Committee considered the appointment of further members to the Personnel Sub-Committee. Due to insufficient eligible members present, the matter was deferred to a future meeting.

6 **Bank Reconciliation and Quarterly Internal Financial Control**

To appoint a Supervising Councillor or Councillors to undertake the quarterly:

a **Internal Financial Control**

b **Verification of the bank reconciliations for all accounts.**

Cllr Bridgman proposed Cllr Todd for the above roles. Seconded by Cllr Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

7 **Report from the Personnel Sub-Committee**

To receive a report from the Personnel Sub-Committee and resolve any actions necessary.

Minuted at Part II.

26/009 Finance

1 **Accounts to 30 April**

To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure Report to 30 April 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 April 2026.

The return on investment as at 30 April 2026 was noted as being 3.87%.

26/010 Items for information only

Not needed.

26/011 Minor matters (if any)

- The Clerk reported ongoing issues with the new dog waste collection service provided by Shield Group. It was noted that collections had not taken place during the first two weeks of May, with a collection eventually completed on 14 May. No further collections had taken place since, and the bins were nearing capacity again. The Clerk advised that multiple attempts had been made to contact Shield Group by telephone and email. Cllr Bridgman suggested that a further formal email be sent advising that emergency emptying may need to be undertaken by an alternative contractor, with the associated costs recharged to Shield Group.
- The Clerk also reported that Tactical had not undertaken cemetery grass cutting since March. A complaint had been raised by the Clerk, a response had since been received, and Tactical had confirmed that cutting would resume the following week.

26/012 Communications

Members thanked the Clerk for the production of the Newsletter and News Bulletin.

26/013 Future agenda items

None other than standard identified.

Part II (if needed)

26/014 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 Morsley seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

1 **Report from the Personnel Sub-Committee**

To receive a report from the Personnel Sub-Committee and resolve any actions necessary.

The Committee received a report from the Personnel Sub-Committee.

It was proposed that Officer D Davis's contract be amended to allow her to work alternate Wednesdays every other week. Cllr Bridgman advised that he would undertake the necessary contract amendments.

Proposed by Cllr Bridgman, seconded by Cllr Hill.

Resolved unanimously.

It was further agreed that D Davis would undertake the relevant budgetary calculations.

Close

The meeting closed at 19:23.

Date of next meeting: 16 July 2026.

Miss Danielle Davis

29/05/2026