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 16 July 2026 at 19:30

Present

Members

Cllrs D Backhouse, G Bridgman (Chairman), D Kilshaw, D Morsley, K Strong and J Todd.

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 19:38 (following the conclusion of the preceding Planning and Highways Committee meeting).

Part I

26/015 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr S Hill. No apologies were received from Cllr J Allan.

26/016 To receive any declarations of interest

None received.

26/017 Public Questions

None.

26/018 Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Thursday 28 May 2026 were received with no amendments and approved unanimously for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

26/019 Chairman's remarks

The Chairman informed the Committee of a motion due to be debated at West Berkshire Council regarding the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan. It was noted that the matter would be discussed further under Part II of the meeting.

26/020 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report was received and noted.

In addition the Clerk reported that a lower panel of the telephone kiosk housing the public access defibrillator had been damaged through anti-social behaviour. The damage had been made safe and reported to Thames Valley Police. The Committee noted that the Estate Management Committee would consider whether replacement of the panel was required.

The Committee noted the current position regarding street trading licences in relation to the proposed village market. Members discussed the future preparation of separate Fairground Terms and Conditions for larger events on the grazing area and smaller commercial activities on the frontage area.

26/021 Items to be taken into private session

Cllr Bridgman decided that Agenda Item 26/022.1 (Policies) and part of Agenda Item 26/025 (Minor Matters) should be taken in private session due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the matters to be discussed.

26/022 Items for consideration

1 **Policies**

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

a **Asset Register - To review regarding insurance;**

b **Asset Valuation Policy - To review regarding insurance**.

Minuted at Part II.

2 **Action Tracker process**

To review the current use of Committee Action Trackers and consider whether any changes are required to ensure that all Committee decisions, actions and discussions are appropriately recorded, transparent and consistent with the approved minutes.

The Committee reviewed the current use of Committee Action Trackers and agreed that Action Trackers should continue to record actions arising from meetings, with Committee discussions and decisions appropriately reflected within the approved minutes to ensure transparency whilst maintaining confidentiality where necessary.

It was further agreed that Committee Chairmen should review the Action Tracker alongside the draft minutes to ensure that all agreed actions have been accurately captured.

3 **Logo Usage Review**

To consider and approve the use of the Parish Council's branding, including the approved logos, colours and fonts, and resolve that only the approved designs are to be used without modification.

The Committee reviewed the Council's branding guidance and reaffirmed that only the approved logos, colours and fonts should be used on Parish Council documents and publicity (save that the structure of policies and documents listed in the Policy List spreadsheet would remain as currently formatted). Members noted that approved logos must not be modified or incorporated into alternative designs.

The Committee agreed that all public-facing documents should use the approved branding. It was further agreed that the Website Working Group should review existing documents and prepare guidance for Members on the correct use of the Council's branding.

4 **Community Events Budget Allocation**

To discuss how to approach a budget for:

a **Farmers’ Market Event**

The Committee discussed the need for an allocated budget to support the development of the Farmers' Market. The Clerk advised that, under her delegated authority, an initial budget of £1,000 from the Community Committee budget had been agreed in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Committee.

b **Christmas Market Event**

The Committee discussed the need for a budget for the Christmas Market and agreed that further information was required before an allocation could be considered.

5 **Review of Council Meeting Schedule**

To consider the current schedule of Council and Committee meetings and whether any changes should be recommended to improve member attendance and engagement.

The Committee considered the current schedule of Council and Committee meetings following correspondence from Cllr Saunders, who raised concerns that the current arrangements may discourage attendance and could present a barrier to attracting younger councillors. Members discussed the previous decision of Full Council and the provisions of Standing Order 85 relating to the reconsideration of previous resolutions.

It was suggested that, should Members wish to revisit the matter, a report setting out the proposed changes and supporting rationale should be submitted before the end of the year to enable the matter to be considered by Full Council at its January 2027 meeting, when the calendar for the municipal year 2027-28 would be discussed.

26/023 Finance

1 **Accounts to 30 June**

To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure Report to 30 June 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 31 May 2026.

The return on investment as at 31 May 2026 was noted as being 3.91%.

26/024 Items for information only

Not needed.

26/025 Minor matters (if any)

- Cllr Morsley advised that a Christmas in Mortimer calendar of Christmas events was being compiled, including the Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On, Nine Lessons and Carols, and other seasonal events.
- Members discussed the possibility of holding a Members' Away Day and whether this remained necessary given the number of Steering Groups and Working Parties currently operating. Alternative options, including a social event funded from the Chairman's Allowance, were also considered.
- The Clerk advised that no response had yet been received from West Berkshire Council regarding the Freedom of Information request. Members suggested referring the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office if a response was not received.
- The Clerk advised that a report would be prepared for Full Council regarding the provision of dog waste bins for the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field.
- Members noted that the decision regarding a contribution towards the Scout Hut project would be considered by Full Council on 30 July 2026.
- Cllrs Strong and Kilshaw advised that the new flagpole would be erected shortly and that guidance on the flying of flags would be prepared.

A further Minor Matter would be dealt with in Part II.

26/026 Communications

None.

26/027 Future agenda items

None other than standard identified.

Part II (if needed)

26/028 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 **Policies**

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

a **Asset Register - To review regarding insurance;**

b **Asset Valuation Policy - To review regarding insurance**.

The Committee reviewed the Asset Register and Asset Valuation Policy in relation to the Council's insurance arrangements. Members discussed whether the current approach to valuing certain infrastructure assets for insurance purposes remained appropriate, noting the potential impact on insurance premiums.

It was agreed that the Asset Register and Asset Valuation Policy should be reviewed in their entirety to ensure that asset valuations and insurance arrangements are appropriate and clearly distinguished. Cllr Backhouse will undertake an initial review before the documents are returned to the office for further consideration and subsequently presented to F&GP or Full Council (in lieu of F&GP) (whichever meets sooner) for approval.

2 **Minor matters (if any)**

The Committee considered a proposed West Berkshire Council motion relating to the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan. Members discussed the accompanying draft Parish Council press release and considered whether it accurately reflected the current stage of the Local Plan process, noting that the opportunity to make formal representations had passed following the Regulation 18 consultation.

Following discussion, amendments were made to the wording of the draft press release. It was agreed that an amended statement could be formulated and then issued following review of the recording of the West Berkshire Council meeting.

Close

The meeting closed at 20:55

Date of next meeting: 27 August 2026.

Miss Danielle Davis

17/07/2026