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 27 August 2026 at 19:30

These draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present

Members

Cllrs J Allan, 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 19:30

Part I

26/029 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Hill.

26/030 To receive any declarations of interest

None received.

26/031 Public Questions

None.

26/032 Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Thursday 16 July 2026 were received with no amendments and approved unanimously for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

26/033 Chairman’s remarks

The Chairman noted:

- He had been unable to attend the previous AWE Local Liaison Committee meeting and would also be unable to attend the next meeting in November. The meeting was usually scheduled from 9.30 am to approx 3.00 pm. Cllrs Strong and Todd volunteered to attend as a substitute, and it was decided that Cllr Todd would attend. The Chairman would ask the LLC Secretary whether a substitute could be accepted and confirm the security and access arrangements.
- NALC had announced the 2026/27 national pay award, providing a 3.3% increase across all pay scales. The revised rates had been incorporated into the August payroll. The RFO would address any resulting budget adjustments.
- A planning application had been received relating to the reserved land at Tower House Farm. Cllrs Bridgman and Todd had attended a site visit and intend to attend the meeting of West Berkshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee. The Chairman estimated that, if planning permission were granted and the development proceeded, the Parish Council could receive approximately £133,000 in Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.
- John Hannawin had resigned from the Community Committee.

26/034 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received and noted (item 6 would be taken into Part II).

26/035 Items to be taken into private session

Cllr Bridgman decided that Agenda items 26/036.1.a (Asset register), 26/36.1.b (Asset Valuation Policy) and 26.034.6 (Clerk's report – FOI/EIR) should be taken in private session due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the matters to be discussed.

26/036 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.

c **Personnel Policy v3**.1

The Chairman explained that the policy was required as supporting evidence for the Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award.

The Committee identified a typographical error in paragraph 3: "To be eligible to stand for election".

It was confirmed that the Personnel Policy fell within the remit of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cllr Bridgman proposed to adopt the policy, Cllr Strong seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

(*Post meeting note – Cllr Bridgman clarified that the Policies Table indicated that the Personnel Policy needed to be agreed by Full Council if amendments were proposed. It would therefore be on the Full Council agenda for the meeting on 10 September*.)

2 **Draft Neighbourhood Plan**

To note the current position regarding the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Committee noted the current position regarding the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Some typographical errors had been identified, and Cllr Morsley volunteered to proofread the document.

The final draft would be presented to Full Council for approval to proceed to Regulation 14 consultation, following which, if so resolved, it would be submitted to West Berkshire Council.

3 **Budget**

To receive confirmation of the approach and timetable for the preparation of the 2027/28 budget.

Confirmation of the budget process was received and noted.

4 **NALC – Silver Award Scheme**

To review the requirements to progress to the Silver Award and resolve any further actions.

The Committee reviewed the requirements for progressing to the Silver Award and identified the following actions:

- agree a word count for councillor biographies, prepare a model biography for members and approach a photographer regarding councillor photographs (Cllr Bridgman would prepare a draft to agree a style);
- prepare a three-year budget and action plan;
- collate the supporting evidence already held by the Council;
- add a discussion regarding a three-year budget and action plan to committee agendas (eg the Community Committee agenda due to be issued the following day).

5 **Jotform**

To resolve whether to continue with the monthly Jotform subscription.

The Committee considered whether to continue with the monthly Jotform subscription.

Cllr Bridgman proposed to cancel the monthly Jotform subscription. Cllr Morsley seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

6 **GreenFest 2026 Funding Request**

To consider a request from the Nature and Climate Network for a financial contribution towards GreenFest 2026, to be held at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, on Saturday 24 October 2026, and to agree any contribution.

The Committee considered a request from the Nature and Climate Network for a financial contribution towards GreenFest 2026, to be held at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, on Saturday 24 October 2026.

Members considered that the event was not sufficiently local and that a financial contribution would not provide a direct benefit to the parish community.

Cllr Kilshaw proposed to not contribute financially to the event, Cllr Bridgman seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

26/037 Action Tracker

To review the Action Tracker, receive an update outlining actions taken since the last meeting, and consider further actions.

The Committee reviewed the Action Tracker and received updates on actions taken since the previous meeting.

- **Scouts funding:** The Council had agreed a contribution of £2,000 and was awaiting confirmation of whether the project would receive match funding through Greenham Trust. If the project was listed for match funding, the Council's contribution would be made at the appropriate time to maximise the funding available. If match funding was unavailable, the contribution would be paid directly to the Scouts.

  Action: The Clerk to update Neil Johnson on the position.

- **Scarecrow Working Party:** A WhatsApp group would be established for the Working Party.

26/038 Finance

1 **Accounts to 31 July**

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

The return on investment as at 30 June 2026 was noted as being 3.85 %.

3 **Bank Reconciliation**

To receive and note the reconciliation has been undertaken for the period of 1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026.

The Clerk reported that the reconciliation has been undertaken and signed off.

4 **Internal Financial Control (IFC)**

To receive and note the IFC Confirmation for the period 1 April 2026 – 30 June 2026.

Cllr Todd reported that the IFC had been undertaken and signed off.

26/039 Items for information only

Not needed.

26/040 Minor matters (if any)

- **Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan:** Cllr Kilshaw reported that a meeting of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Cabinet would take place at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 8 September 2026. He had reviewed that Council's website and noted that references to "summer 2026" had been removed. Cllr Todd confirmed that she would attend the meeting with Cllr Kilshaw.

- Hedges adjacent on route to St Mary's School: The Clerk reported that the landowners had not responded to the Council's correspondence. Cllr Morsley advised that the hedges had not been cut back ahead of the start of the new school term. Members agreed that the next step would be to report the matter to West Berkshire Council.

  Actions:

  - The Clerk to report the landowners to West Berkshire Council.
  - The Clerk to ask the Clarke's Educational Trust trustees whether the hedge to the left of the school entrance belonged to the Trust and, if so, to arrange for it to be cut back.

26/041 Communications

None.

26/042 Future agenda items

None other than standard identified.

Part II (if needed)

26/043 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;**

Cllr Backhouse introduced the item and summarised his supporting paper. Members discussed the risk of over-insuring assets for which the Council would be unlikely to make a claim, including the tennis courts, pillbox and wetpour surfacing.

Cllr Bridgman suggested that a schedule of the Council's leases and their expiry dates should be prepared, noting that the pillbox lease was due to expire at the end of 2026. Members also agreed that the flagpole should be added to the Asset Register.

Cllr Bridgman proposed to delegate authority to Cllr Backhouse and the Clerk to undertake a detailed review of the Asset Register and associated insurance arrangements. Seconded by Cllr Morsley.

Resolved unanimously.

Actions:

- Cllr Backhouse and the Clerk to review the Asset Register and insurance arrangements.

- The Clerk to add the flagpole to the Asset Register.
- A schedule of the Council's leases and their expiry dates to be prepared.

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

Cllr Bridgman advised Cllr Backhouse and the Clerk that any amendments to the Asset Valuation Policy arising from their review of the Asset Register should be referred to him for drafting.

2 **Clerk's Report**

- The FOI/EIR request was discussed and the proposed response noted.

Close

The meeting closed at 20:48

Date of next meeting: 29 October 2026.

Miss Danielle Davis

28/08/2026