Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee held on Thursday 8 October 2026 at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer, RG7 3TB

Present

Members

Cllrs G Bridgman, S Child, M Dennett, D Kilshaw, D Morsley and J Todd (Chairman).

Other Councillors

Officers of the Council

S Taylor

Public/Press

No members of the public or media attended.

Commencement

The meeting commenced at 18:45

Part I

26/086 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Allan, Hill and Lock.

26/087 To receive any declarations of interest

Cllrs Todd and Bridgman declared a personal interest for 26/094.4 as they know the applicant for planning application 26/00511/FULL: Manns Farm.

26/088 Public Questions

Four members of the public were present to discuss agenda item 26/094.3 – 26/01837/HOUSE: Pine Croft, St Catherines Hill. Their main concern was that the application's internal layout is inconsistent with a single-family C3 dwellinghouse. The plan details six bathrooms and one toilet.

26/089 Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee Meeting held on 17 September were received with no amendments and approved with one abstention for signature by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

26/090 Chairman's remarks

Cllr Todd had no remarks.

26/091 Items to be taken into private session

Cllr Todd determined that agenda items 26/092.2 and 26/093.1 would be discussed in Part II due to the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed.

26/092 Steering Group Reports

1 **To receive the draft minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group from 15 September 2026.**

The committee noted that the minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group of 15 September had been received. Cllr Bridgman reported that the Neighbourhood Plan was ready to go to the Regulation 14 Public Consultation on 12 October 2026.

2 **To receive an update from the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Steering Group.**

Cllr Kilshaw reported that there was no update, and the next update from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council was expected in July 2027. A further confidential update was discussed at Part II.

26/093 Items for consideration

1 **Budget 2027/28 and Medium-Term Financial Planning.**

To consider the Planning and Highways Committee budget requirements for 2027/28, including indicative budget requirements for 2028/29 and 2029/30, and agree recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Minuted at Part II.

26/094 Schedule of Planning Applications for consideration

#Cllr Todd proposed to bring 26/094.3 forward on the agenda.

3 **26/01837/HOUSE: Pine Croft St Catherines Hill Mortimer Reading RG7 3UT**

Extensions and alterations to the existing C3 dwelling, comprising a two-storey rear extension, a first-floor extension over the existing ground-floor footprint, and the provision of a new roof. The proposed works also include internal remodelling and alterations to the existing layout, resulting in a three-bedroom single dwelling house with two dedicated study/office spaces. The proposal also includes a small storage shed for the dwelling house.

SMPC comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council considered the plans for this application at the meeting of its Planning & Highways Committee held on 8 October 2026 under Agenda Item 26/094.3 and strongly objected. Please find the response below: -

Application: Pine Croft, Mortimer Recommendation: Strong Objection

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council submits a **strong objection** to the above application. The Council considers the proposal to be **incompatible with a C3 single-family dwellinghouse**, inconsistent with the character of the area, and insufficiently evidenced in several key technical respects.

1 **Internal Layout Is Not Consistent with a C3 Dwellinghouse**

The proposed internal arrangement is **not characteristic of a single-family C3 dwelling**. The plans show:

- **Six en-suite bathrooms and one additional toilet**, far exceeding what would reasonably be expected for a standard family home, **but no family bathroom**.
- **Two rooms each labelled as "office", and one as "reception",** but all with en-suite bathrooms, so which could be readily converted into additional bedrooms.
- A layout that appears designed to support **multiple unrelated occupants,** raising concerns that the **property** could function as a **de facto C4 HMO**.

The Council considers the internal configuration to be **materially inconsistent** with the stated use class and therefore unacceptable.

2 **Lack of Parking Layout – Despite Highways Acceptance**

No **parking layout** has been provided with the application.

The Parish Council is **surprised** that Highways has not requested even an outline parking plan, nor appeared to consider the **true extent of the parking demand** that could arise from a dwelling with:

- multiple potential bedrooms,
- six bathrooms, and
- a layout that could support multi-occupancy.

Without a parking plan, it is impossible to assess:

- the number of vehicles likely to be associated with the property,
- the impact on neighbouring amenity and on-street parking,
- compliance with Policy TM1 of the Mortimer NDP regarding safe and adequate parking provision.

The absence of this information is a **significant deficiency**, and the Council does not consider Highways' acceptance to be justified given the scale and nature of the proposed internal layout.

3 **CIL Liability Form Incorrect**

The Parish Council are concerned that the submitted CIL form is **incorrect**. Given the scale of internal works and the potential intensification of use, we believe the development **should be CIL-liable**. The Council requests that West Berkshire Council require a corrected submission and assess liability accordingly.

4 **Overlooking and Privacy Concerns – Bathroom Windows**

- The Council objects to the proposed bathroom window arrangements. In particular:
- The large first-floor bathroom window on the right elevation directly overlooks neighbouring properties.
- No commitment to obscure glazing is provided.
- This represents an unacceptable loss of privacy and conflicts with **NDP Design Principles** and **WBC's House Extensions SPD**.

All bathroom windows should be **obscured and fixed shut below 1.7m**, and the current design is not acceptable.

5 **Concern That the Application Intends to Circumnavigate C4 Requirements**

The Parish Council is concerned that the true intent of the proposal is to circumnavigate the regulatory requirements associated with a C4 House in Multiple Occupation. The internal layout—featuring six bathrooms, multiple rooms capable of conversion to bedrooms, and facilities far exceeding those typical of a single-family dwelling—strongly suggests a design aimed at supporting multiple unrelated occupants.

This raises a material planning concern because:

- The scale and configuration of facilities are not characteristic of C3 use.
- The number of potential bedrooms and bathrooms is consistent with HMO-type occupation.
- The absence of a parking plan further obscures the likely intensity of use.

The Council considers that the proposal, as submitted, appears structured to enable HMO-level occupancy under a C3 designation, thereby avoiding the proper scrutiny, standards, and controls that apply to C4 use. Any such intensification should be subject to full planning permission, not achieved through design that masks the intended operational use.

For the reasons outlined above, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council **strongly objects** to the Pine Croft application. The proposal:

- Does **not** demonstrate compliance with C3 use,
- Provides insufficient parking information,
- Submits incorrect CIL documentation,
- Creates overlooking and privacy harms, and
- Raises legitimate concerns about **future intensification of use**.

The Council respectfully requests that West Berkshire Council **refuse** the application or require substantial amendments to address these issues.

If, to the contrary, West Berkshire Council is minded to give planning permission, this Council requests that an Article 4 Direction is made so as to require a planning application for an otherwise permitted development conversion from the stated Use Class C3 to Class C4.

1 **26/01751/FUL: 2 West End Road Mortimer Common Reading RG7 3SY**

The proposal comprises the erection of four three-bedroom dwellings (two detached and two semi-detached) following the demolition of the former dilapidated dwelling and associated structures.

SMPC comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council considered the plans for this application at the meeting of its Planning & Highways Committee held on 8 October 2026 under Agenda Item 26/094.1 and strongly objected. Please find the response below: -

Application: 2 West End Road Recommendation: Strong Objection

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council submits a strong objection to the above application. The proposal represents an over-intensive, out-of-character form of development that would harm neighbouring amenity, undermine the established semi-rural grain of West End Road, and conflict with the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

1 **Excessive Density – 32 Dwellings per Hectare vs. 15 Dwellings per Hectare Locally**

The proposed density of approximately 32 dwellings per hectare is more than double the prevailing density of around 15 dwellings per hectare in this part of Mortimer.

This is a clear conflict with:

- NDP Policy HD4, which requires development to reflect local character, spacing and openness,
- the established pattern of detached homes in generous plots, and
- the applicant's own description of the locality as low-density.

Such an uplift cannot be accommodated without significant harm to character and amenity.

2 **Harmful Proximity to Existing Houses**

The proposed dwellings sit unacceptably close to neighbouring properties, creating:

- a heightened sense of enclosure,
- reduced outlook,
- increased overshadowing and visual dominance, and
- elevated overlooking from upper floors.

This proximity materially worsens the impact of the scheme's height, massing and roof form, and is inconsistent with the area's established pattern of separation between dwellings.

3 **Insufficient Amenity Space and Unsafe Parking Provision**

The proposed amenity areas are small, shallow and tightly constrained by building footprints and boundary relationships. This conflicts with NDP Policy HD4, which requires spacious plots and meaningful private gardens.

In addition, the Parish Council has significant concerns regarding safe and sufficient parking provision, specifically:

- The constrained plot size limits the ability to provide safe on-site parking and turning,
- The proximity to neighbouring boundaries restricts manoeuvring space,
- Overspill parking cannot safely occur on West End Road due to existing restrictions and visibility constraints,
- The intensity of development increases parking demand beyond what the site can safely accommodate.

The combination of small amenity space and tight parking arrangements creates a layout that is neither safe nor functional, and fails to meet the amenity expectations of both the Local Plan and the NDP.

4 **Roof Height Exceeds Surrounding Properties by Approximately 1 Metre**

The proposed roof height is around 1 metre higher than neighbouring dwellings. In context, this is a significant increase, given:

- the close proximity to boundaries,
- the shallow garden depths, and
- the elevated position relative to neighbouring plots.

The result is a visually dominant roofscape that is out of keeping with the modest, traditional roof forms characteristic of West End Road.

5 **Dormers Breach the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The inclusion of dormer windows is a direct breach of the NDP's design principles, which:

- discourage dormers where they create overlooking,
- require roof forms to be sympathetic to local character, and
- emphasise modest, traditional rooflines rather than bulky or intrusive upper-storey features.

In this case, the dormers:

- introduce elevated overlooking into neighbouring gardens,
- increase perceived height and massing, and
- materially conflict with the NDP's requirement for development to respect local roof character.

Their inclusion is unjustified and harmful.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council strongly objects to the application at 2 West End Road. The proposal:

- more than doubles the prevailing density,
- sits too close to neighbouring homes,
- provides insufficient amenity space,
- fails to demonstrate safe and sufficient parking,
- introduces a roof height higher than surrounding properties, and
- includes dormers in breach of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The scheme represents overdevelopment and fails to respect the established character, scale and amenity of this part of Mortimer. The Parish Council therefore requests that West Berkshire Council refuse the application.

2 **26/01874/FUL: 6A Victoria Road Mortimer Common Reading RG7 3SE**

Change of use of existing first floor office accommodation (Class E) to provide four ensuite guest bedrooms for short-stay visitor accommodation (Use Class C1), together with associated internal alterations, enlargement of existing window openings and installation of a new window.

SMPC comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council considered this application at its Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on 8 October 2026, under Agenda Item 26/094.2, and objected. The Council supported the concerns raised by Highways regarding insufficient parking provision and by Environmental Health regarding noise and had no further comments to add.

4 **26/00511/FUL: Manns Farm Nightingale Lane Mortimer Reading RG7 3PS**

Reconsultation - Retrospective Change of Use from agricultural use to ancillary use to a wellness centre granted under application 22/01080/FUL.

SMPC comments: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council considered the plans for this application at the meeting of its Planning & Highways Committee held on 8 October 2026 under Agenda Item 26/094.4 and had no objections.

26/095 Schedule of Planning Applications to note

None to note.

26/096 Planning Applications for Future Consideration

To note any further new application, which will become agenda items in due course:

1 **26/02048/HOUSE: 14 Asparagus Close Mortimer Reading RG7 3WY**

Addition of solar panels to the roof of the house (14 Asparagus Close). The solar panels will be matt black not extend above the ridge of the roof nor below the gutter line. They will protrude less than 200mm from the plane of the roof.

26/097 Items for information only

1 **Decisions received from West Berkshire Council**

1 **26/01394/HOUSE: 10 Damson Drive Mortimer Reading - Retrospective single-storey rear conservatory extension.**

APPROVED – 16 September 2026

SMCP Comments: - Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council considered the plans for this application at its Planning & Highways Committee meeting on 16 July 2026 under agenda item 26/041.2 and had no objections. The committee would like to note that the West Berkshire Council interactive map is incorrect and does not match the red boundary line on the Location Block plan document

2 **26/01923/NONMAT: 37 Victoria Road Mortimer Common Reading RG7 3SH - Application for a Non-Material Amendment Following a Grant of Planning Permission 24/00957/HOUSE.**

Amendments: Change the proposed construction of the single storey rear extension from masonry cavity walls to timber frame with slate coloured "Fibre cement click" cladding. I would also like to remove the proposed door on the side elevation to create a solid wall, and put double-doors on the rear elevation facing down the garden.

APPROVED – 29 September 2026

26/098 Action Tracker

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

The Planning Action Tracker was reviewed, with outstanding items discussed and the following actions identified: -

26/099 Minor Matters

- Cllr Bridgman reported that West Berkshire Council is considering abolishing the Eastern and Western Area Planning Committees and replacing them with a single district-wide Planning Committee. This follows changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, which now distinguishes between two categories of planning applications: Schedule 1 and Schedule 2. This will be discussed at their meeting on 13 October.
- Cllr Bridgman reported that the Regulation 14 Public Consultation for the SMPC Neighbourhood plan was starting on 12 October and would run for six weeks.

26/100 Communications

Nothing to communicate.

26/101 Future Agenda Items

None.

Part II (if needed)

26/102 Exclusion of Public and Press

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 item to be discussed.

Cllr Todd proposed.

Cllr Bridgman seconded.

Resolved unanimously.

1 **26/092.2 – To receive an update from Basingstoke and Deane Loal Plan Steering Group.**

Cllr Bridgman reported that a response had been received from the Englefield Estate regarding the proposed development at West End Farm. The confidential letter would be circulated to the full Council.

2 **26/093.1 Budget 2027/2028 and Medium Term Financial Planning**

To consider the Planning and Highways Committee budget requirements for 2027/28, including indicative budget requirements for 2028/29 and 2029/30, and agree recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

The 2027/2028 Budget for the Planning and Highways Committee was reviewed and agreed for recommendation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Close

The meeting closed at 19:42.