

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting held at Methodist Church Hall, Mortimer on Tuesday 21 October 2025 19:30

Steering Group Attendees

Doug Overett - Meeting Chair (DO) Joanne Emberson-Wines (JW); Tennant Barber (TB); Bob Coe (BC); Neil Kiley (NK); Sallyann Taylor (ST – Minute Taker)

SMPC Attendees

CLlr Andrew Richardson (AR) and Danielle Davis (DD) – The Clerk were also in attendance.

Members of the Public: 7

1. Apologies

Graham Bridgman (GB) and Jayne Todd (JT) who were attending a District/Parish Conference.

2. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

3. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of 16 September 2025 were agreed with no amendments.

4. NDP and Reserved Land

DO reported that a representative from the Oak Tree Dental surgery is not happy with the time it is taking for the Planning Application to be submitted by TA Fisher. The Planning Application is now expected at the end of October, and the handling of this application will take 13 weeks.

5. Public Consultation feedback

DO reported that the public consultations had gone very well and that around 220 households had attended. The Parish Office to take a photo of the map which showed the attendees and place on NP SharePoint.

TB had collated all the comments from the consultations and separated them between Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Policies and the 350 homes proposed at Mortimer West End Farm. TB and BC agreed to go through them and update the list and decide which ones should be included in the NP Policies. The 350 homes comments will be passed to a potential new Working Party, which would come under the Planning and Highways committee. JW proposed we post an online thank you to the community for all their comments and make the comments available. TB to review the comments before we publicise them on the NP website and remove names. DD proposed to put posters on all the noticeboards with a QR code to the website where the comments are. Also, a thank you post on FB with a link to the website.

Actions: JT, BC, DD, ST

6. Mortimer West End Farm proposal

DO reported that the NP Steering Group (SG) is not the Action Group who will deal with the Basingstoke and Deane proposal of 350 houses at Mortimer West End Farm as it's not part of their brief. There will be a public meeting on Saturday 25 October to discuss next steps, and this could involve setting up a working party. This could include members of the Parish Council, NPSG members and residents.

7. Neighbourhood Plan updates

The SG had met with a third-party planning advisor on 20 October, and he had confirmed that we should declare potential sites in our new NP in case we are asked to take on more housing.

The planning advisor had also recommended we add an addendum to the NP which would talk about cross-border development. This addendum would strengthen the strategic framework of the Stratfield and Mortimer Parish Neighbourhood Plan by establishing a formal expectation that West Berkshire Council (WBC) would invoke the Duty to Co-operate in all cases where proposed development outside the Parish boundary would result in substantial impact on Stratfield and Mortimer Parish. It would seek to ensure that the principles, policies, and protections enshrined in the Neighbourhood Plan were respected and adopted by neighbouring planning authorities when such developments arise. DO read out the first draft of that addendum prepared by JT. The SG agreed to add an addendum policy statement to the NP.

The next step would be to write the NP. We need to check with JT whether she is able to take this on. We will also need to involve a planning consultant to ensure it is worded correctly. AR reported there is money in the budget earmarked for this. We need money to write the NP policies and any other costs up to the examination stage. We also need a planning consultant and budget for the proposed 350 homes by Basingstoke & Dean so we can get legal advice on how to write our objection. The planning advisor suggested to allow £10,000 for this second part. It is not clear yet how much the planning consultant for the NP itself would cost and we need to get quotes. NK to check with planning consultant we have used before whether they have the capacity.

A representative from the residents of West End Road reported that they had engaged a private planning consultant for the 350 proposed homes at West End Farm and a report had been produced which they were happy to share with SMPC and NPSG.

Actions: JT, NK

8. AOB

DD reported we need to agree the response to an email received from Basingstoke and Deane on 14 October about their request for evidence in relation to our current NDP. JW mentioned that the planning advisor had said all the evidence is held by West Berkshire Council and we should direct Basingstoke and Deane to WBC. DD to update the letter to reflect this. The SG agreed the text for the letter.

DD also reported we need to agree a response to a WBC letter received on 15 October. In a note sent by GB prior to this meeting he highlighted that fundamentally they have not said how WBC view their duty to cooperate obligations. We want to know what they think their obligations are now. We will wait outcome of meeting GB and JT are attending for District/Parish Conference this evening to agree a response. SMPC to take the lead on the letter and keep NPSG informed.

JW also asked if we had received responses from MPs. DD to chase as so far the office has not received any responses from MPs.

Actions: DD

Close

Meeting ended 21:36

Next meeting 04.11.2025 at 19:30 at Methodist Church Hall, Mortimer.