

Parish Council Report for period up to 13 May 2019
CLlr Graham Bridgman (West Berkshire Council, Burghfield and Mortimer Ward)

West Berkshire Council

Elections - the aftermath

The people have spoken (or at least those who voted have)!

I am very pleased to have been elected to the new Ward and look forward to working with the parishes for the benefit of our residents. Having also been elected onto Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, I look forward to working with my fellow parish councillors and the community.

There may be some parish councillors who don't know me and I look forward to meeting you. By way of brief introduction, I've been a WBC District Councillor since 2015 and prior to the election I was the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care (all positions, save for the Leader of Council and Chairman of Council, cease until the Council's annual meeting – see below).

Locally I am a director of the not for profit Mortimer Music Live Community Interest Company, a walk leader with the Mortimer Walking for Health Group, and I run the late entry stall at the Mortimer 10k.

Professionally I am a solicitor and have been married to Joan for nearly 40 years. We've lived in Mortimer for over 20 years and have two grown up daughters and three grandchildren.

Keith, Carol and Ian

Over the last four years I have had the great pleasure and fortune to be able to work in particular with Keith Chopping (Sulhamstead Ward), and Carol Jackson-Doerge and Ian Morrin (Burghfield Ward). Keith retired at this election and Carol and Ian were unsuccessful.

Keith was an excellent mentor and a pragmatic and practical local councillor. He deserves his retirement having served WBC with great acumen, including two stints as Chairman.

Carol has enthusiastically served the community of Burghfield with distinction for the last 12 years, including the last year as Chairman of WBC (a position she retains until the meeting on 21 May). Ian brought an absolute breath of fresh air to some of our meetings with an incisive commercial insight and challenge to the world of local government (no-one present will forget his expletive deleted contribution to one of the meetings of the Financial Challenge Panel!).

Carol, Ian and I got on immensely well together and, both having been elected to Burghfield Parish Council, I look forward to continue to working with them on local issues (and Ian now has the shackles off to contribute to the Grazeley debate!).

Meetings

Council will meet on 21 May. This will be the annual meeting at which the Leader, Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be elected and the Executive and Committee members appointed.

Lynne Doherty has been chosen by the Conservative Group to be our Group Leader and, given the distribution of seats on the new council, is likely to be elected as the Leader of Council for the next four years. Lynne has announced that I will be her Deputy, and this will be official as and when she is elected (as the Leader she will choose the Executive). I very much look forward to working with her and the rest of the team, and indeed with the Opposition leadership, in bringing forward policies for the benefit of the residents of the district.

Local Matters

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

The anticipated meeting between various local representatives and the police representatives including Alan Hawkett, new local Inspector, took place in Burghfield on 17 April.

The meeting discussed the ongoing issues, their impact on local residents, the steps being taken by the Police, and how the local Councils and residents might be able to help support the Police.

The Police explained that the more factual information (eg regarding suspicious behaviour) and crimes that are reported, the more likely that resources can be directed appropriately and prompt action taken:

- for crimes taking place and/or imminent risk of physical injury – dial 999;
- for reporting crimes after the fact or providing information regarding suspicious behaviour/observations pertaining to a potential crime or ASB:
 - dial 101; or
 - use the police online reporting system - www.thamesvalley.police.uk (saves waiting for a 101 response);
- for reporting crimes/giving information anonymously, use Crimestoppers – an independent charity – www.crimestoppers-uk.org or telephone 0800 555 111.

The Police are due to implement a new contact management platform in June, which should enable the force to pull information together (and spot patterns of crime etc) more quickly, as well as enabling a greater statistical basis for prioritising investigations.

TVP is also using Facebook to communicate - www.facebook.com/thamesvp.

Thames Valley Berkshire Smart City Cluster Project

A £400k Challenge Fund Call - part of the Thames Valley Berkshire Smart City Cluster project (led by Reading BC, with WBC as one of the partner authorities) is asking innovative Berkshire businesses to develop internet of things (IoT) solutions to tackle real challenges faced by local authorities in the delivery of their services.

A two-year project, funded by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), seeks to deliver state of the art IoT communications across the region with a series of calls for innovation, of which this is the first.

This first Call consists of four 'Challenges', focusing on tackling loneliness, reducing falls in the elderly, supporting independence in travel and targeting investment to improve energy efficiency in homes. Each Challenge will involve a development and pilot phase so that the benefits can be evaluated and knowledge can be shared as these are common challenges faced by councils across the UK. Grants of up to £100k are available for each Challenge.

WBC's Challenge, developed by the Public Health team, is to develop an IoT solution to prevent falls - an important issue not just for the WBC Adult Social Care team, but also for partners such as the NHS as well.

Roadworks

A reminder of resurfacing projects due locally this year (2019/20)

Beech Hill

Beech Hill Road (Grazeley Road > Wokingham Boundary); 1,113m; Surface Dressing.

Stratfield Mortimer

Longmoor Lane excluding Estate Service Road (Windmill Road > Burghfield Road); 1,216m; Surface Dressing;

Unnamed Road (Padworth Road > St Catherine's Hill); 943m; Surface Dressing;

Unnamed Road aka Mortimer Lane (Beech Hill Road > District Boundary); 1,644m; Surface Dressing.

Wokefield

- Goring Lane (350m east of Reading Road mini roundabout > 450m east of Reading Road mini roundabout); 100m; Re-Texturing

Parishes

Parish elections

Now that the dust has settled on the local parish elections, let me congratulate those elected, thank those that stood - but were unsuccessful - for entering the fray, and wish all retiring councillors the very best and thank them for their service to their communities.

Stratfield Mortimer

Horse and Groom - planning application

A fresh, amended, plan has been filed, discarding the idea of an extension, and replacing it with a pergola and some external seating (available via the WBC planning portal under the original application number). However, I met with a Punch Taverns representative at the H&G this morning (9 May) and understand that a third iteration of the plans are going to be filed – I await to see these and will consult as needed.

MOR006 – NDP site

There is a current planning application to slightly amend the layout of the houses – the number (ie 110 units) remains the same. Importantly, the new plans also identify where the affordable housing (44 units) will go and there is a specific plan showing the types of affordable housing, numbers of bedrooms, etc. I have been in touch with WBC Planning, and 13 will be shared equity and 31 will be for social rent (so far as WBC Housing is aware a registered provider is yet to be appointed by TA Fisher).

The plans, details of the layout changes, a plan of the affordable housing locations and types, etc, can be found on the WBC planning portal.

Community Infrastructure Levy

As Cllr Dennett will be aware, there has, to say the least, been an issue with the WBC system that calculates CIL, in particular the CIL owed to SMPC in respect of the Tower House site. I'll leave that to Mike to give more detail on at the meeting on 16 May.

Graham Bridgman

13 May 2019