

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 7:30pm at South Marston Village Hall.

Council Members present	
S Brown (SB) (Chair) A Carter (AC) B Thunder (BT)	T Leathart (TL) N Hole (NH)
Clerk & Responsible Officer:	K Morgan
Borough Councillors present:	M Vallender
Others present:	Mrs Featherstone, Mr Cave-Ayland

Acronyms used in these minutes:

SBC – Swindon Borough Council, PC – Parish Council, NP – Neighbourhood Plan, NPC – Neighbourhood Planning Committee, SMRA – South Marston Recreation Association, OSWG – Open Spaces Working Group, CWG – Communications Working Group, SM website – www.SouthMarston.org.uk, ML – Mandy Larcombe (bookkeeper)

Agenda item & minute number	Summary	Action
Open 10 Minutes 10/25-26	Mrs Shepherd raised issues with the state of the former Post Office and the collection of rubbish on the land, which has been ongoing for years and has been raised with the council previously on several occasions. It was explained that the council has no regulatory powers to intervene but could raise the matter informally again. It was also noted that it could be raised with Cllr Vallender who may be able to pursue the matter as ward councillor.	None
1. Apologies 11/25-26	CM on holiday, MP was working.	None
2. Declarations of interest 12/25-26	Cllr Brown has an ongoing general interest due to the proximity of her property to development sites, the proposed roads and the likely opportunity for mains services to her residence, as well as meetings she is helping coordinate. Council continues to note this.	None
3. To approve and sign the minutes of the	The minutes were approved. Proposed: TL	None

Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16 th April 2024 13/25-26	Seconded: AC Approved: All	
4. Ward Councillor Update 14/25-26	Cllr Vallender gave an update: - Cllr Vallender has completed his candidate application for South Marston ward for 2026 elections and has been asked to join the borough council shadow cabinet with responsibility for flooding, infrastructure etc. - Construction vehicles – summary of the meetings so far and comments on signage that has been put up. Issues are ongoing. There is an option for a planning enforcement to be requested but that is a last resort and hopefully the situation can be managed between Cllr Vallender, the Parish Council and developers. - A positive meeting was held with Parish Council and early years officer from SBC. The aim will be to build a case to commercial providers to invest in creche facilities in the parish. Work on this is ongoing. - Meeting held with Parish Council and planning policy team to discuss next stages of Local Plan and requirements.	
5. Review of actions 15/25-26	Review of actions currently outstanding. Clerk to update the following: Oct 24 90/24-25 Hoddinotts Corner – maintenance responsibility unclear, to be pursued with Cllr Vallender. Nov 24 100/24-25 War memorial – Clerk to pick a date and proceed with refurbishment. Apr 25 185/24-25 Watering - compensation for watering helpers to be determined. It was agreed to delegate decision to BT and Clerk. Apr 25 185/24-25 Allbuild – to invoice us for £1000, draw up simple agreement to cover watering arrangement.	Clerk
6. Review of Council Calendar 16/25-26	The PC reviewed progress. - Annual Parish Meeting to take place on 28th May following the latest Have Your Say.	None

	- Audit to take place on 27th May	
7. Clerk's Report 17/25-26	Report was reviewed. - Council discussed and agreed to fund Mr Cave-Ayland's DBS check for his work with Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Payment for £21.50 to be made in June. Proposed: SB Seconded: NH Approved: All - Mrs Featherstone's Duke of Edinburgh initiative was discussed: Mrs Featherstone expressed her concern that her Duke of Edinburgh initiative was reported on in the agenda. This was a work in progress and the documentation sent to the clerk was for information only. She said it was unfortunate that it had been misunderstood by everybody. The Clerk explained it had been put on the agenda because the process and paperwork that had been sent had come as a surprise; it appeared to be establishing a formal process for community links to the D of E scheme, with the Parish Council supporting it. The Chair confirmed that had been her impression too. The Chair stressed that the Parish Council would still be willing for public liability and personal injury insurance to apply to any litter-picking activity involved, and that simply required the clerk to have the names of volunteers taking part. Mrs Featherstone said that she was now intending to work on the project as an individual. Those undertaking Duke of Edinburgh scheme training (and their families) with her would not be requiring the use of the council's insurance and would provide their own equipment. She confirmed her advanced DBS was up to date.	Clerk

8. Planning applications 18/25-26	The following applications were discussed: The following planning matters had been responded to prior to the meeting: - S/25/0432 Symmetry Park – HGV charging bays - S/COND/25/0528 Keypoint - lighting for new warehousing - S/25/0475 Kennington, Highworth Road – erection of bungalow S/25/0541 Various works at Unit 1 Stirling Road, main SM business park - Cllr Hole to review and propose response. Clerk to submit when agreed.	Clerk
9. Discuss and agree Legal Fee Requirements 19/25-26	Council discussed the legal fee requirement for the land transfer and village centre construction which was estimated at up to £26,000. - It was agreed that while the costs were not ideal there was little option other than to proceed. The process covered the transfer of land, rights of way and the village centre construction and eventual ownership by the Parish Council. With a land development/construction to the value of £1.6 million, SMPC must cover all legal risks and complexities - It was agreed that an alternate quotation for the legal fees was not practicable given the time constraints of the process and that Thrings has been our solicitors for many years, and they had assigned additional expertise to assist with the complexity of the case - Additionally it was agreed that approaching an alternate solicitor would require considerable effort in bringing them up to date with the process so far which would further delay matters and involve additional costs. - Council resolved to agree fees of up to £26,000: Proposed: BT Seconded: AC Approved: All Clerk to contact Thrings and ask them to proceed.	Clerk

10. Reports from Working Groups 20/25-26	Communications Working Group: Report noted. - Changes to website have been well received. We await updated analytics for additional information. - Efforts to communicate effectively online remain challenging with part time staff but things are improving. Working alongside Cllr Vallender is proving effective. - Noted that finances for CWG are challenging - it was agreed to approach SBC to access Travel Plan funds for a new Welcome Pack. Open Spaces Working Group: Report noted. - A query was raised about the old kissing gate that has been recovered from the village memorial garden. It is to be restored and future use to be determined. - Noted that Mr Cave-Ayland will liaise with Allbuild to arrange watering while Cllr Thunder is away. - A request from a resident for a memorial tree to a family animal has been received and was discussed. It was generally agreed that this was not a situation that would be encouraged due to setting a precedent and because of future maintenance concerns. Allotments Working Group: Report noted. - Tenancy agreements to be updated taking into account recent changes including mains water. Cllr Thunder and clerk to coordinate and produce updated agreement. - Now mains water is available it is still unclear what the situation is with regard to metering and charges. To be discussed with landowner (now Panattoni) when required.	

	Rights of Way Working Party: Report noted. - Situation with debris placed on footpath 2 was discussed. Mr Cave-Ayland will investigate and approach residents informally.	
11. Reports relating to expansion 21/25-26	Strategic Planning Working Group Report noted. - It was noted that the SPWG has again approached Taylor Wimpey to pursue the options for GI maintenance. - It is believed that the tender documents for appointment of a designer for the Village Centre have yet to be issued as nothing has been seen yet. - A positive meeting has been held with the borough forward planning team discussing options for the future Local Plan policies with regard to area, local and neighbourhood planning. The aim is a satisfactory transition for policies covering the parish, from being focused on the NEV area to being focused on the totality of South Marston parish.	None
12. Other reports 22/25-26	SMRA and Play Working Group report: Report was noted. - Offer to help with the forthcoming Have Your Say event was appreciated. Event will feature an overview of SMPC progress with the Village Centre design and a display of plans by Taylor Wimpey Parish/borough Liaison: Report was noted.	None
13. Finance 23/25-26	To review and approve finance statement, bank statements and payments: - Council resolved to approve payments totalling £12,825.60 , including two late payments already made in April.	None

	Proposed: NH Seconded: BT Approved: All Spending approved at this meeting: - £21.50 for Mr Cave-Ayland for DBS - Up to £26,000 for legal fees relating to land transfer and village centre construction/ownership	None
14. Matters brought forward 24/25-26	BT noted that he had attended the open day at Nightingale Forest and that considerable tree works will be taking place there as part of the overall management of the woods. SB noted that some of the roadside verges along the approach roads to the village are getting long and the situation will need to be monitored.	None

The meeting closed at 9:28pm

Signed by Chairperson:

Date: