

Notice of meeting

11th December 2025

Councillors are summoned to a meeting of South Marston Parish Council on **Tuesday 16th December 2025 at 7:30pm** in the Village Hall. Members of the public are welcome to join the meeting.

Kevin Morgan, South Marston Parish Council

Agenda item	Supporting info	Start time
Open 10 minutes	None	7:30pm
1. Apologies	None	7:40pm
2. Declarations of interest Members are reminded that they should declare any interest they have in an agenda item at the start of the meeting or, if not previously foreseeable, during any discussion of the matter concerned.	None	7:40pm
3. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th November 2025	Website	7:40pm
4. To receive Ward Councillor Update		
5. To review and update the Parish Council actions	Actions	7:55pm
6. To review and update the Parish Council calendar	Timeline	8:00pm
7. To review and discuss the Clerk's Report	Report	8:00pm
8. To review and comment on Planning & Highways matters: S/RES/25/1485 Re: Reserved matters application (following planning application S/OUT/13/1555) for details of the access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping in relation to South Marston West electricity substation. The outline planning application was subject to and submitted with an Environmental Impact Assessment. At: Land To The North Of A420, South Marston Swindon Deadline: 16 th December 2025 — Response submitted prior to meeting. S/RES/25/0836 Re: Reserved matters application (following planning application S/OUT/13/1555) for Land North of A420, Eastern Villages. Details of the access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping in relation to the western section of the Northern Loop Road connecting from the Primary Street to Parcels R1 and R2; and onwards to the north of Parcel R3. The outline planning application was subject to and submitted with an Environmental Impact Assessment. At: Land To The North Of The A420, Known As South Marston And Rowborough, Swindon Deadline: 16 th December 2025 S/COND/25/1184 Re: Partial Discharge of Condition (9) Design Code from previous application S/OUT/13/1555.	SBC planning website	8:10pm

At: Land North Of A420, Eastern Villages Swindon

Deadline: 17th December

S/COND/25/1561

Re: Partial Discharge of Conditions (11) LEAMP (13) Tree Protection (17)

Bats (25) Turning Facilities (36) CMS (37) CEMP (42) Surface Water

Drainage (44) Materials from previous application S/OUT/13/1555.

At: Land North Of A420, Eastern Villages, Swindon

Deadline: 25th December

S/COND/1564

Re: Reserved matters application (following planning application S/OUT/13/1555) for details of the access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping in relation to South Marston Central electricity substation. The outline planning application was subject to and submitted with an Environmental Impact Assessment.

At: Land North Of A420, Eastern Villages Swindon

- Response submitted prior to meeting – no objection to substation but general overall objection awaiting response for utility provision for existing properties.

S/25/1566

Re: Removal of Condition 1 (Occupation) from Planning Application T88/0296.

At: Longleaze Bungalow, Longleaze Farm Shrivenham Road South Marston

Swindon

Deadline: 31st December

- Response submitted prior to meeting with no comment.

S/25/1597

Re: Installation of 2no. Permanent Fascia Signs (attached to main reception entrance) and 2no. Entrance panel signs at the roadside adjacent to site access point.

At: Unit C, Stirling Court Stirling Road Swindon SN3 4TQ

Deadline: 2nd January 2026

S/25/1598

Re: Installation of 1no. bike shelter and 2no. security barriers to car park entrance and exit points within the car park; 1no. smoking shelter to the rear of building and 5no. air conditioning condensing units to the rear and side elevations of the building.

At: Unit C, Stirling Court Stirling Road Swindon SN3 4TQ

Deadline: 2nd January 2026

S/RES/25/1581

Re: Reserved matters application (following planning application S/OUT/13/1555) for details of the access, layout and scale in relation to Rowborough Primary Street and associated drainage swales and ponds. The outline planning application was subject to and submitted with an Environmental Impact Assessment.

At: Land North Of A420, Known As South Marston And Rowborough Eastern Villages Swindon

Deadline: 3rd January 2026

9. To review and adopt IT Policy		8:30pm
10. Reports from Working Groups a) Communications b) Open Spaces c) Allotments d) Rights of Way	Reports	8:30pm
11. Reports relating to Expansion Strategic Planning Working Group	Report	8:40pm
12. Other reports a) SMRA & Play WG b) Parish/Borough Liaison	Reports	9:00pm
13. Finance - To review and approve finance statement and payments - To review minutes of FWG Meeting	Finance Statement	9:20pm
14. Matters brought forward by or with the consent of the Chair	None	9:30pm

This meeting may be recorded by the Council or members of the press or public. Such recording should be in accordance with the Council's Recording Policy – this is available on the website and a copy will be made available at meetings.

Actions:

Group, AWG – Allotments Working Group, SPWG – Strategic Planning Working Group, FWG – Finance Working Group, NPC – Neighbourhood Planning Committee, SBC – Swindon Borough Council, NP – Neighbourhood Plan, SMRA – South Marston Recreation Association, NEV – New Eastern Villages, GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations

In Progress – started but no significant progress yet

Progressing – some notable progress has been achieved

Done - means that action is complete but there may be a need for a follow-up.*

Meeting & minute	Area	Action	Progress update	Owner	Review date
Oct 24 92/24-25	Clerk's Report	Wiltshire Prepared – clerk to meet with Highworth TC in new year.	Progressing	Clerk	Jan 26
Apr 25 185/24-25	Working Groups	Clerk and BT agreed compensating watering volunteers – Clerk to process	Done	Clerk/BT	Dec 25
Apr 25 185/24-25	Working Groups	Clerk to chase developers over RoW queries.	Progressing	Clerk/BT	
Jun 25 38/25-26	Working Groups	Commemorative requests – Clerk to draft policy	Pending	Clerk	
Oct 25 80/25-26	Clerk's Report	Trees off Thornhill Rd – works done by SBC	Done	Clerk	

Added in November 2025					
Nov 25 90/25-26	Co-option of Councillor	M Vallender coopted – clerk to notify SBC and update website	Done	Clerk	
Nov 25 95/25-26	Calendar	Alternate quotes for contractors for services to be sought.	Progressing	Clerk/BT	

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Calendar:

NOVEMBER 2025		
Responsibility:	Activity:	Progress
Council administration	Ask SMRA to confirm grant amount requested	Dec/Jan
Council administration	Renewal process for service contracts 26/27	Dec/Jan
Finance Working Group	Produce and review Q2 Finance report, assess budget requirements	Done
Agenda items:	- Review service providers	
DECEMBER 2025		
Responsibility:	Activity:	Progress
Communications Working Group	Produce January edition of Community News	
Council administration	Consider SMRA MOU and grant	January
Council administration	Clerk to circulate draft service contracts for approval	January
Council administration	Remind school licence fee due	
Finance Working Group	Meeting to review budget, precept requirement	Done
Agenda items:	- Agree SMRA MOU and grant - Review draft service contracts	
JANUARY 2026		
Responsibility:	Activity:	Progress
Allotment Working Group	Send New Year email/letter to tenants	
Council administration	Review and propose precept amount	
Council administration	Notify SBC of precept amount	
Council administration	Issue contracts to suppliers	
Finance Working Group	Confirm appointment and date for internal auditor	
Council Administration	Produce 3rd quarter Financial Management report	
Finance Working Group	Meeting to review Financial Management Report and confirm budget recommendation	
Open Spaces/Footpaths	Review SBC maintenance	
Agenda items:	- Review and approve precept amount and inform SBC - Review and approve 3rd quarter Financial Management Report - Present draft budget - Review and sign new supplier contracts - Review SBC footpath maintenance	

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Clerk's Report:

Report details	
Report Date:	December 2025
Report written by:	Clerk
Inclusion in PC meeting: Agenda item number:	Dec 2025 7
Overview	
Salary payments IT policy Trees Watering compensation Street Naming	
Item	Progress/activity update
Salary Payments	Due to the Christmas period and probable unavailability of councillors to authorise, the salary payments for Clerk and Editor will be processed early on w/b 22 nd December.
IT Policy	An IT policy has been circulated – this is on agenda for adoption this month. Content has been adopted to our requirements but in general is not open for discussion as it is based on a template issued by NALC, which includes items required for audit.
Allotment Water Supply	Billing still to be worked out. Nothing further heard since contact reestablished with Panattoni and its maintenance contractors.
Tree Works Issues	Works on trees by Ash Gardens have been completed by SBC tree gang – email expressing thanks for fast action sent to officer responsible. Consideration of how to deal with other potential tree issues is under review.
Watering Compensation	Vouchers for £100 each to be presented to Rachel Case and Alison Thunder as a thank you for their efforts in watering new trees over the summer, including costs of metered water.
Street Naming Request	SBC has contacted the council regarding the naming of streets in the new developments. Council has already discussed this and is considering its formal response.
Correspondence	An email was received from a member of the public raising concerns about the lack of use of the Leaze as an alternate route during road closures. This email included accusations that a councillor had used their position to stop diversion of traffic. An email clarifying the situation and correcting the points made was sent in response. No further correspondence received.
Actions or queries for consideration by the Council at PC meeting	
Note the above	

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Communications Working Group report:

Report details	
Report Date:	08/12/2025
Report written by:	Sylvia Brown
WG Meeting date:	03/12/2025
Inclusion in PC meeting:	Dec 2025
Agenda item number:	10
Overview	
Advertising prices CN Distribution Welcome Pack Project	
Progress/activity update	
CN Production	Multiple options for full edition in January. Lots of photos potentially available and full quota of advertising. A number of development related issues are likely to be duplicated across various contributors – free standing announcements re road closures, PC and Borough Cllrs sections, so will need strong editorial coordination this time round.
CN Advertising Prices	CWG discussed and recommended increases to our advertising charges. This was a result of seeking out charges by other magazines in the area, and noting that we had regularly filled our quota in recent years with minimal work seeking out new advertisers. To match other providers, we are increasing the cost of some advert sizes by a higher amount than others, and going for round figures rather than a strict % increase. Sharon is producing the formal list for PC agreement – hopefully this will be ready for approval at this meeting.
CN Distribution	We have lost our distribution person for Magdalene Close at short notice but have worked out a temporary solution ahead of recruiting new people to the delivery teams. Hilary has produced new documentation to ensure we can keep track. Some of our deliverers have large rounds to manage, and we would, in general, welcome offers of more people to join the delivery team to ensure sustainability.
Welcome Pack	There is a high turnover of properties in SM at the moment and we are running out of existing WP copies. SB and BT have done an inventory and we have some 19 copies remaining, but, with some internal printing, we could increase that before we needed to resort to anything more expensive. Revised Welcome Pack – cooperation with Panattoni now promised – SB and BT will contact in the New Year.
Facebook/website data	Annual analysis in hand, although the way systems allow collection of data keeps changing. The soft evidence is also very valuable (eg recent example of the success of producing information on the Thornhill Rd roundabout closures)
PC Recommendations/Actions	
- Note the report - Agree the recommended increases in advertising charges as from 1 April 2026 (if available)	

Open Spaces Working Group report:

Report details	
Report Date:	9 th December 2025
Report written by:	Barry Thunder
Inclusion in PC meeting:	Dec 2025
Agenda item number:	10
Overview	
Lengthsman tasking Oxleaze Woods Village trees & orphan land	
Progress/activity update	
Lengthsman tasking	Hedge trimming as required. General path clearance as required. Support to SMRA via Lionel. Working in St Julians Wood and Oxleaze Wood.
Oxleaze Woods Work Day	We held a planned work event with the Bodleian and Glencar (who are the contractors building extensions to the Book Store). Our first day was a great success and we coppiced eight Hazels and felled a damaged Oak tree. Sadly rain caused the second day to be cancelled. We plan to catch up on this during January.
Village garden	Some work required to reduce the height of bushes and some fence repairs. The cost for the fence repairs is pending the time to carry out a close review.
Village Tree Maintenance	The damaged tree in front of 2 Ash Gardens has been dealt with by SBC. In the village overall, Orphan land sites are ageing and new areas may come under our control via development. It is recommended that we form a policy on how we can tackle this where possible via light preventative management.
Additional support	Chris Brooks has been able to resume some of his previous work with open spaces which is most welcome.
Actions or queries for consideration by the Council at PC meeting	
Councillors are requested to note the above and discuss as required.	

Allotments Working Group report:

Report details	
Report Date:	9 th December 2025
Report written by:	Barry Thunder
Inclusion in PC meeting: Agenda item number:	Dec 2025 10
Overview	
Allotment availability Water leak in memorial garden Rental increase S106 funds	
Item	Progress/activity update
Allotment plot updates	Currently all plots are let. We have one tenant under notice due to lack of maintenance on his two plots. He is pending eviction on December 15th. A complaint from the tenant regarding this notice has been raised with the Clerk and is being dealt with.
Water leak in memorial garden	The leak from the water pipe has been reported to Panattoni. They have agreed to repair the leak. The mains water supply is currently turned off until Spring 2026 or later depending on weather conditions.
Review of Allotment rents for 2026/27	With no actual ideas of water costs as yet, we are holding back on advising tenants of rent increases for 26/27. Current thinking is around £5 pa to every plot, but yet to be confirmed.
Bellway s106 funds	These need to be fully utilised by January 2027. My request is to use up to £1000 of this fund to purchase suitable machinery to benefit the allotment site and the current and expanding village overall. Items required to allow us to widen the maintenance tasks are: A petrol wheeled Wood Chipper (up to a 2 inch branch cut), a cordless Einhell Leaf Blower (to utilise exiting power units), a lightweight cordless Einhell chainsaw, and some additional interchangeable Einhell battery packs to allow for wider usage of our cordless tool range.
Actions or queries for consideration by the Council at PC meeting	
Councillors, please note all the above. Agree expenditure of approx. £1000 from s106 funds as noted above.	

Rights of Way Working Party:

Diversion of Footpath 15 to be discussed.

Strategic Planning Working Group report:

Report will be circulated separately.

SMRA report:

Report details	
Report Date:	10/12/25
Report written by:	Sylvia Brown
Working Group meeting date:	9/12/25
Inclusion in Parish Council meeting:	December 25
Agenda item number:	12
Rec Maintenance Changing Room Issues Future of current Village Hall	
Rec maintenance	All going well and use of POPS team in conjunction with lengthsman and volunteers has recently been very helpful. The trees adjacent to Stonecroft are due to be pollarded this year. To be pursued in the New Year in conjunction with the Parish Council. The grass cracking remedial work has made a real difference, and ensured that most of the priority areas are now in better condition with risks mitigated. However, the safety surface under the Motic Track is showing signs of weakening due to the ground not having finally settled post-installation and the fact that the surface probably gets most use of any equipment within the play area. The situation is being monitored and action to be considered in the New Year. Similar problems under the Witches Hat have been cured by importing and spreading new material. Grass cracking is obviously more than an intermittent problem for SMRA and annual maintenance is required, albeit not as costly as the major drainage remedial work done this year by Ecosolve.
Play Area Safety/Repair	Sovereign Play have recently produced their report on their 6 monthly inspection of the Play area equipment. Three minor risk issues continue to be reported, which met safety standards for the equipment when installed. In previous years, these have been noted and monitored, but no action taken in the light of the need to balance the degree of potential harm with the major work in rectifying them. The longstanding problem of the toddler's roundabout repair will hopefully be concluded shortly. One new issue was identified with an item of gym equipment which is being rectified and will result in a request for use of the SMRA 'fund' within the PC accounts.
Football Hire	Still going well. However, there was a further recent incident concerning the changing rooms being left in an unacceptable state, with the doors also left unlocked and lights on. It has been too difficult to demonstrate which team (if any) may have been responsible. To prevent future occurrences, daily visual checks are now being made by volunteers and all teams informed that what happened is unacceptable.

	There is a gap in football hire over Christmas. Draindown procedures will be organised by Lionel and the lengthsman to prevent risks to plumbing in the changing rooms.
Financial agreement with SMPC	The Rec annual maintenance contract has been discussed. The contract will be renewed with Allbuild – the grass cutting costs element has increased by 5%. However, pitch marking has increased by a higher percentage and is paid mainly on a ‘call-off’ basis. Furthermore, the cost of post-match cleaning needs to reflect the degree of work involved (it has remained static for many years and is below minimum wage rates). It was agreed that some of these additional costs would be reflected in higher hire charges for the next season (next May onwards). SMRA discussed and agreed that, given the increased sharing of responsibilities on the Rec between SMPC and SMRA, but taking into account the increased need for remedial grass cracking and additional maintenance costs, a 5% increase in the overall maintenance grant is proposed for 2026/27. In terms of the Village Hall grant, no major work is planned, although caretaking/book-keeping costs will rise from Jan 1 2026 in line with forthcoming changes to minimum wage rates. The Village Hall is currently experiencing problems with the trip switches, the cause of which has so far defied our expert volunteers and may need further professional investigation. We believe there are areas of work in the coming year, such as tackling the eventual future of the existing village hall, including legal and professional fees that SMRA would not be able to fund from its normal income. We conclude that the finances between the PC and SMRA will be increasingly shared on a case by case basis, so we do not formally request an increase in the current level of the Village Hall grant.
Village Hall long term future	Work has begun on discussing what may need to happen to maximise the potential of the Hall if conversion to housing is being considered. Adequate external space eg for access and parking are priority areas to be tackled and discussions have been initiated.
PC Recommendations/Actions Note the request for funds under the MOU to support Rec Maintenance and the grant for the Village Hall. Final approval of the amounts will be needed at the January meeting.	

Parish/Borough Liaison report:

Report will be verbal or circulated separately.

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Finance

December 2025

Account balances:

Account	Balance date	Balance
Unity Trust	30/11/2025	£48,701.00
Nationwide	30/11/2025	£88,654.79
Hinckley & Rugby BS	09/12/2025	£61,574.60
	TOTAL:	£198,930.39

Payments

Payment method	SMPC ref	Payee	Reason	Dept	VAT	Total
BACS Paid 28/11/2025	0124	Staff	Salaries	Admin, comms	£0.00	£2,222.03
DD 03/12/2025	0125	HMRC	Month 8	Admin	£0.00	£574.35
BACS 17/12/2025	0126	Mandy Larcombe	Bookkeeping	Admin	£0.00	£135.00
BACS 17/12/2025	0127	Allbuild	Pitch marking	SMRA	£48.00	£288.00
BACS 17/12/2025	0128	Allbuild	Waste collection	Open Spaces	£29.63	£177.79
DD 17/11/2025	0129	Lloyds Bank	Various	Various	£71.85	£437.07
BACS 19/11/2025	0130	J Wright	Lengthsman hours	Open Spaces, allotments	£0.00	£161.00
DD 28/10/2025	0131	Scottish Widows	KM Pension Oct	Admin	£0.00	£305.44
DD 28/11/2025	0132	Scottish Widows	KM Pension Nov	Admin	£0.00	£305.44
BACS 17/12/2025	0133	B Thunder	Expenses	Various	TBC	TBC
				TOTALS:	£149.48	£4,606.12

Credit Card summary form

Month: Dec 2025

Cardholder: Kevin Morgan

Payee	Reason	Dept	Code	Net	VAT	Total	Receipt attached
Vonage	Phone Line	2	7080	£13.33	£2.67	£16.00	Y
Lloyds Bank	Monthly fee	2	7605	£3.00	£0.00	£3.00	Y
Microsoft	Office Licenses	2	7080	£25.53	£5.11	£30.64	Y
Cartridge People	Printer Inks	2	7100	£153.22	£30.65	£183.87	Y
TOTALS:			TOTALS	£195.08	£38.43	£233.51	

Cardholder: Barry Thunder

Payee	Reason	Dept	Code	Net	VAT	Total	Receipt attached
Lloyds Bank	Monthly fee	2	7605	£3.00	£0.00	£3.00	Y
Amazon	Angle Grinder	12	7517	£34.99	£7.00	£41.99	Y
Amazon	Nail Gun	12	7517	£98.32	£19.66	£117.99	Y
Amazon	Printer Ink	2	7100	£33.82	£6.76	£40.58	Y
TOTALS:			TOTALS	£170.13	£33.42	£203.56	

Minutes from Teams FWG Meeting

3rd December Attendees: SB, CRM, AC, BT, Clerk, ML

The main purpose of the meeting was to explore the forthcoming precept setting exercise that leads to a decision at the January PC meeting. The main relevant factors were costs and income that relate to General Reserves items + SMRA which require an allocation of precept funding.

The detail of fund management and capital expenditure will be required for the forward budget, but the finalising of the budget can be done at a later date when more information is available.

It was noted that:

- Precept tax base for 2026-27 is to rise by 5.8% but this essentially cancels the 6% decrease to tax base that was applied in 2025-26.
- It was noted that it may be several years after 1st occupation that we receive substantial benefit in tax base from any occupation of the new housing.
- 2026/7 quotes and estimates had now been obtained for almost all the main expenditure items.
- If no precept increase was requested for 26-27 we would be running at an estimated deficit of approx. £14k
- All costs continue to increase year on year and are not necessarily simply reflected by the inflation figure (eg Allbuild increase of 5% to all contracts)
- Some costs could rise considerably more than inflation with the increase in detailed involvement in development activity – communications and community engagement in particular.
- We have some CIL funds which can be used to offset some costs and also s106 which has more restricted usage rules.
- Costs will also increase to look after the growing parish and also as we absorb more tasks from SBC - these would be somewhat offset by management companies maintaining new infrastructure but questions remain over staffing of the new Village Centre, responsibility for things such as dog bins in new developments etc
- Also noted that while we have carefully built considerable reserves for both specific purposes (trees, facilities, phasing fund), these have been held for things such as legal fees for the Bell Gardens land transfer (estimated at approx. £20k). Drawing reserves down to meet a desire for a smaller precept request could cause future issues with available funds.

Having seen worked options for different % rises, members of the FWG were asked for an opinion on acceptable precept increases given projected deficits. It was agreed that a range of increase from 3.5% to 10% would be considered and more accurate budget figures would be presented to council in January for a decision.