SOUTH MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th August 2026

at 7:30pm at South Marston Village Hall.

Council Members present	
C McEwen (Chair) S Brown (SB) A Meenan (AM)	M Vallender (MV) B Thunder (BT) N Hole (NH)
Clerk & Responsible Officer:	K Morgan
Borough Councillors present:	M Vallender
Others present:	Mrs Featherstone, Mr Cave-Ayland, Mr A Meenan

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 66/26-27	Mr Cave-Ayland thanked the council for chasing the issue with the bridge over footpath 2 off Chapel Lane, which has now been fixed by SBC. He also notified council that the lights purchased for the Christmas event have been delivered, tested and stored. Mrs Featherstone mentioned her concerns about the situation with the excessive growth in the dry bed of South Marston brook and circulated some photographs. Cllr Vallender has raised this with the environment agency. Mr Meenan asked whether, given recent nationwide issues with fire risks, there were any emergency plans in place for the village. The chair explained the history of such initiatives and the problems with keeping the information up-to-date, There is a current County-wide initiative, but it has yet to gain traction. Currently the village has none in particular. Cllr Vallender mentioned the emergency number for Swindon Borough Council and that he would circulate it.	
1. Apologies 67/26-27	Cllr Carter sent apologies as he had work commitments.	None

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2. Exclusion of Press and Public 68/26-27	Council resolved to exclude the press and public. Proposed: SB Seconded: NH Approved: All Council discussed the co-option. The public then rejoined the meeting.	
3. Co-option of Councillor 69/26-27	Council resolved to co-opt Mr Meenan to the council. Proposed: CM Seconded: SB Approved: All Cllr Meenan signed the acceptance of office form and took his seat. Register of interest form to be sent to Cllr Meenan which he will complete and return to SBC.	
4. Declarations of interest 70/26-27	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 coordinating help and information provision on behalf of a collection of 12 neighbours. Additionally Cllr Brown declares a direct interest in utility provision and the issue of closure of the Leaze, which she is engaging with SBC and developers about.	None
5. To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21st July 2026 71/26-27	Minutes were approved. Proposed: BT Seconded: NH Approved: All	None
6. Ward Councillor Update 72/26-27	The update was reviewed: - 20mph zone is hopefully going live on 1st September. - Thames Water has confirmed the smells near Magdalene Close are not due to their pipework and are coming from Bellway pipework. Being referred to Bellway for investigation. - Revised Local Plan has been approved for consultation. Cllr Brown asked if the public documents would include	None

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		further information on assessment of allocated sites. Cllr Vallender to check what is being made available. - Additional resurfacing funding is expected as SBC Highways officers have concerns about the state of the roads in the village having visited site.	
7.	Review of actions 73/26-27	Review of actions currently outstanding. - Emergency signage – Clerk has identified a source but it was noted the value of getting these is questioned. To be revisited if required. Remove as an action. - Emergency networks - Further discussions about this to be had with Cllr Vallender, the clerk and Cllr Meenan to be involved.	Clerk
8.	Review of Council Calendar 74/26-27	The PC reviewed progress.	None
9.	Clerk's Report 75/26 -27	Report was reviewed. - Google licensing review - it was proposed that council adds user backups to the provision for Clerk, Cllr Brown and the editor. This would be an additional cost annually of £180. Council resolved to approve this: Proposed: NH Seconded: MV Approved: All Clerk to organise with licensing provider. A separate suggestion was made by the chair that SMRA and potentially other organisations might have an email account/s setup and administered on the council domain. It was agreed that this would be carried forward to September for consideration and the clerk would email council in the meantime with information about this. - Trees for Greenfields – matter was discussed. Issues with some properties and access they use for vehicles across the grass was mentioned. It was agreed that a letter would be circulated in Greenfields by Cllr Vallender to ascertain a) if there was support for tree planting there and b) if there is willingness to help with watering and care of the trees among the residents.	None Clerk

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	- Cllr Brown mentioned that as we were considering IT matters, it may be useful to consider using a volunteer or temporary employee to archive old photographs and articles. Matter to be considered in future.	
10. Planning applications 76/26-27	It was noted that there are currently multiple ongoing applications and these are responded to by the Strategic Planning Working Group as and when possible. Submitted responses can be viewed on the Swindon Planning Portal. These applications were discussed: **S/RES/26/0521 Parcels r14 and r15** – responded to prior to the meeting. **S/RES/26/0667 Parcel r10** - draft response has been discussed, to be confirmed and submitted after the meeting. **S/26/0987 Works at Keypoint Unit 1** - Application received after the agenda had been issued. Initial discussions raised the possibility of noise issues from changes for the proposed Crown Timber site and existing issues with bright intrusive lights. Response to be confirmed and submitted.	
11. Reports from Working Groups 77/26-27	**Communications Working Group:** Verbal report was given. - Some new correspondents are now contributing to Community News. - Contact has been made with residents in the new developments. - Some progress has been made with revisions to the current Welcome Pack inserts. Numbers to be printed still under discussion. - MS Publisher is being withdrawn imminently. Trials of a free replacement– Affinity – by the editor have been positive and this package will be used going forward. **Open Spaces Working Group:**	None

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	Report was reviewed. - Village garden – proposed solution was discussed and generally agreed. BT to confirm costings of the knee rail fencing. Council approved expenditure of £1,300 to undertake initial clearance and fencing, to be taken from CIL funds. Proposed: NH Seconded: MV Approved: All - Chapel Lane hedges – it was agreed to use Allbuild to do initial reduction of the hedges at no cost, and any future minor maintenance of the hedge to be done by the lengthsman. **Allotments Working Group:** Report was reviewed. - It was resolved that the council joins the National Allotment Society at an annual cost of £70. Proposed: AM Seconded: MV Approved: All **Rights of Way Working Party:** - Cllr Brown reported that the expected short Leaze closure has been delayed, but a temporary route for pedestrians and cyclists has been installed in the location to allow continued use when the closure happens. - The Chair mentioned issues with brambles overgrowing and potentially limiting access to footpath 2 in places. To be investigated by Mr Cave-Ayland and options of how to deal with this to be reviewed. **Village Hall Working Group:** - Nothing further to report.	None

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12. Reports relating to expansion 78/26-27	**Strategic Planning Working Group** Report reviewed. - Most planning matters have moved onto the Rowborough developments, although drainage concerns that have been raised by the council within existing developments remain. - Road naming – some concerns over numbering which appears confusing in places. Additionally it has been confirmed that 'The Leaze' will retain its name after evidence the council submitted was accepted by borough officers. - Initial input has been given into public art processes for the new developments, but there are decisions and consultations still to be done.	None
13. Other reports 79/26-27	**SMRA:** Report was reviewed. - The issue with recreation ground cracking was again raised. Further funding for repair to be dealt with in following agenda item. **Parish/borough Liaison:** - Clerk mentioned ongoing issues with failures of communication between the borough and parishes.	None
14. Request for expenditure on recreation ground repairs 80/26-27	Council resolved to approve the request for additional funds to help repair the recreation ground following further cracking caused by the record dry weather. Proposed: AM Seconded: BT Approved: All Total amount of £4,121 exc VAT to be funded from s106 sports and Property Contingency funds (including the previously agreed amount of £3,000 in July). Invoices for this work already included in August's payments.	None
15. Finance 81/26-27	**To review and approve finance statement, bank statements and payments:**	

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	- Council resolved to approve payments totalling £12,738.45 as listed on the finance summary. Proposed: SB Seconded: NH Approved: All **Spending approved at the meeting:** - Additional £1,121 for recreation ground repairs - £70 for National Allotment Society membership - £180 to add backups for three Google users - £1,300 for initial works on the Village garden **To review the Q1 Monitoring Report:** - The clerk explained that he had changed the format of the report slightly, which is to be trialled for this financial year, and that this should present no less accurate information. - Cllr Brown noted some concerns with the change of format of the report but was happy with the format being trialled. - It was agreed that future changes to the council, including running the new Village Centre once that is operational, would require further changes to reporting and financial processes. - There were no issues raised with the figures themselves.	None None None
16. To review future agenda items 82/26-27	None.	None

The meeting closed at 9:35pm

Signed by Chairperson: **Date:**

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