



South Mimms & Ridge Parish Council
Thursday 5th February 2026 South Mimms Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Ralph Bania, Cllr Chris Myers, Mark Hedison, Cllr Neil Johnson (from 7.20pm)

Natalie Curran (Clerk). Residents were present in person and on line.

Before the meeting started the Clerk reminded residents that 24 hours notice is required for the Zoom code as she doesn't work for SM&RPC on a Thursday and comes to meetings directly from her other job.

Minute Ref 2025/26:

- 63.** Cllr Myers (Deputy Chairperson) welcomed residents to the meeting and announced that Cllr Cathy McCaffrey has step down from being the Chair, he proposed Cllr Bania as the new Chair and Cllr Hedison seconded this, **Cllr Bania accepted and was duly elected as the Chairperson of the Parish Council**, for the remainder of the Council Year (to end of March) after which the AGM will take place.
- 64.** Cllr Bania welcomed Cllr Mark Hedison who was elected in January by public election. Cllr Bania wanted it noted that SM&RPC are a very open PC who (unlike some others) do not request that all questions from the public are submitted in advance of meetings and who actually welcome public question and engagement. All residents are welcome at meetings and able to voice opinion as long as this is in a respectful manner and doesn't disrupt the formal business of the Council.
- 65.** Apologies for absence received from Cllr Cathy McCaffrey(unwell).
- 66.** No declarations of Councillor interests pertaining to agenda items were received.
- 67.** The minutes of the last meeting (December 2025) were approved and the Chairperson signed.

68. Finance:

Agreed: the precept call been made to Hertsmere Borough Council at £82.63 per household for the financial year 2026/27. This has increased by £21,20 from £61.43 in 2025/26. Cllr Bania explained that this demand had to be based on *estimated* figures for the cost of the unscheduled election held in January as the final exact cost is not yet known. The Clerk clarified that once the precept demand has been made and processed at Borough it doesn't change.

Cllr Myers expressed personal disappointment that the election had been triggered as any candidate for co-option would have been welcomed to submit an application. He explained to residents present that for a Parish Council mid-term co-option was the norm and he felt the additional cost and resultant increase in Council Tax for 2026/27 could have been avoided.

It was discussed by the Councillors and residents present, that the parties that sought to trigger the election by canvassing signatures either do not live in the Parish or are believed to have since left the Parish.



69. Planning:

The following planning applications were heard:

- a) Material change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 4 Gypsy/Traveller families, each with one caravan/mobile home, together with part retention of existing hardstanding, part restoration of existing hardstanding to grass, planting of hedgerows, and erection of acoustic fencing (Part Retrospective). Land Adjacent To Romani St Albans Road South Mimms Potters Bar EN6 3PP Ref. No: 26/0057/FUL

It was noted that the Parish Council has already lodged an OBJECTION to this application as approval would be in contravention of the Planning Inspectors ruling, following two court cases.

- b) Reconstruction of barn and stables that were destroyed by fire. Improvements to private roadway. (Retrospective application).
Stilegate Stables Blanche Lane South Mimms Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 3LF Ref. No: 25/1750/FUL

It was noted that the Parish Council has already lodged an OBJECTION to this application as this site is under investigation by the environment agency and Hertsmer for inappropriate commercial activity with HGVs and commercial operation outside of standard trading hours.

Clerks post meeting note: The day following this meeting resident reported a fire at the site with a smell of burning plastic and also a Hertsmer Environmental Services note that a Cement company had applied for a operator's licence at the site. The Clerk is escalating the issues to the Environment agency again.

- c) Replacement of two existing marquees with two new buildings, for purposes ancillary to the wider activity farm park.
Willows Activity Farm Coursers Road Colney Heath St Albans Hertfordshire AL4 0PF Ref. No: 25/1739/FUL No objections received.
- d) Late addition to agenda: 15 Blanche Lane – Demolition of exiting detached dwelling and construction of three new dwellings, 1 detached and 2 -detached. Ref 2026/0061/Full.
The wisdom of the development was discussed given that the site directly backs onto the M25 and the site had previously seen subsidence. Only one resident felt that building three homes were there had been one was 'overdevelopment'. The Parish Council didn't resolve to lodge an objection.

70. Planning enforcement:

It was noted that enforcement is being pursued by Hertsmer Borough Council on the site at the top of Blanche Lane next to the M25 Bridge. This is in respect of the unauthorised change of use and encroachment onto Highways owned land.

71. Hertsmer Local Plan

It was noted that on the afternoon of 26th March, the Master Builders for the Bowman's Cross new village, will be having a public information session at South Mimms Village Hall. It was reflected that U&C might have booked Ridge Village Hall as Bowman's cross is in Ridge Ward.



72. To Note Staff Changes:

Cllr Bania explained that the Clerk, Natalie, is going to reduce her hours with SM&RPC and step away from many of the day-to-day issues to concentrate on some larger projects like Local Government Reorganisation and the Local Plan, whilst still clerking meetings. The Parish Council will be employing a Deputy Clerk and Bookkeeper **to be the first point of contact for residents going forward on office@SouthMimmsRidge.org.uk**. The position was filled by Mrs Wendy Martin who was present to meet the Councillors and residents..

Mrs Bobbie Wanless continues as our Community Officer on SMHall@SouthMimmsRidge.org.uk

The Council welcomed Wendy who will be formally starting employment soon.

73. Community

a. It was noted that work by the County Council to finally replace the bridge in The Meadows is expected to commence this month.

b. Cllr Bania asked the Clerk if the Community Payback Team could be engaged again for litter clearing. ACTION CLERK

C Cllr Johnson reported that he has personally cleared the drainage ditches, repaired potholes and cleared fly tipping in Blackhorse Lane for which residents thanked him.

The Clerk undertook to contact Hertsmere about the removal of an asbestos shed roof.

ACTION CLERK

D It was noted that there had been a substantial flytip on land belonging to Gascoyne Estates on Swanland Road. Flytips on private land aren't cleared by the Council and are a cost to the landowner. Cllr Myers reported that the new Enforcement Team at Hertsmere have now prosecuted over 100 fly tips from evidence gathered at scenes.

E The Council received a verbal update from a representative from the action group against the Solar Farm development off Earls Lane: Highways have objected to the development due to poor access and there remains no plan of how the site would connect to the National Grid. The group hope to have their report for Hertsmere ready in time for the planning meeting (probably in April). It was noted that this is high performing farmland. The group are still receiving objections if residents want to add their voice to the 470 already received.

F Cllr Johnson said there are still issues with fires being lit in the SSSR Woods above Blackhorse Lane and the Welwyn and Hatfield Council side now has a blanket TPO but Hertsmere have not followed suit. The Clerk undertook to email Cllr Myers with details of the cases. ACTION CLERK,

74. Events to note:

Kids half term film 16th February (SM Hall)

Quiz Night – 20th March (SM hall)

Interactive Bingo at the Black Horse Pub – 16th May.



Public questions following the main meeting

An update was requested on the new build in Blanche Lane that was built beyond the planning – the Clerk said that this was still within the 3 year enforcement window so no further action could be taken yet.

Date of the next meeting:

5th March 2026 in Ridge Village Hall 7pm, then 2nd April at South Mimms which will be the AGM.