

South Mimms & Ridge Parish Council

Annual Meeting of South Mimms & Ridge Parish Council and Annual Meeting of the Parish Residents.

Thursday 11th May at the Village Hall, Blanche Lane, South Mimms

Present: Cllr Cathy McCaffrey, Cllr Mark Hedison, Cllr Chris Myers,(South Mimms Ward)

Apologies received from Cllr Ralph Bania (Ridge Ward)

Clerk: Natalie Gettings

Guest: Harvey Patterson, Head of Legal Services, Hertsmere Borough Council

Approx 20 members of the public and 1 person on Zoom.

Min Ref. 2023/24/..

Part 1 - Annual Meeting of South Mimms & Ridge Parish Council

Elections

1. The newly elected Councillors signed acceptance of office forms and presented their declarations of interest forms to the Clerk. Cllr Bania had already signed his and delivered them to the Clerk in advance.
2. It was proposed by Cllr Myers that Cllr McCaffrey should be Chairperson for the next year and this was seconded by Cllr Hedison. It was proposed by Cllr Hedison that Cllr Myers should be Deputy Chairperson for the next Council Year, this was seconded by Cllr McCaffrey.

Cllr McCaffrey and Cllr Myers were duly elected as Chairperson and Deputy respectively.

3. One vacancy was required to be filled by co-option, with no other persons having stood for election. This position as a South Mimms Ward Councillor was offered to resident Mr Daniel Becker and was duly accepted. Cllr Becker presented his acceptance of office and declaration of interest forms to the Clerk.

Policies

4. It was agreed that the Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations published by The National Association of Local Councils should be adopted.
 5. It was agreed that the new Hertsmere Code of Conduct should be adopted.
 6. It was agreed that all other policies previously adopted by South Mimms Parish Council, as published on the Council's website, should be adopted until such times as they are next due to be reviewed.
 7. It was agreed to adopt the previous Mission Statement of SMPC pending a review in the June meeting.
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Finance

8. The following payments were considered and approved:
- Membership subscription - Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils
 - Public Liability insurance premium -
 - Registration fee - Office of the Information Commissioner
 - Website hosting and Village Hall Internet. It was also agreed that £117 should be spent to migrate the council's website to a new 'southmimmsridge.org.uk' address. Councillors will also be getting SM&RPC email addresses in line with best practices.
9. To Note: Each year the smaller authorities' Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an appointed External Auditor. For Hertsmere this is PFK Littlejohn LLP.

As the Clerk also acts as the Responsible Finance Officer, the Council appoints an independent and qualified Internal Auditor every year to sign off on our submission. This is to ensure transparency and independence. Mr Alex Sage has been appointed to audit the Accounts of South Mimms Parish Council for the previous Financial Year.

Part 2 Annual Meeting of the Parish Residents.

Cllr McCaffrey gave a statement of the previous Parish Council's activities in the last year:

"This is the final Chairperson's Statement for South Mimms Parish Council, as we have now become South Mimms & Ridge Parish Council, following the Hertsmere Community Governance Review. We are now split into two Wards and have a Parish Councillor who will be dedicated to Ridge Ward, Cllr Ralph Bania.

Looking back, South Mimms Parish Council once again had a busy and productive year. You will have all seen the new Village Gateway signs, which were bought after feedback regarding the need for clearer demarcation between The Services and the village, as well as signalling the start of a "village setting" to traffic approaching from London Colney and Potters Bar.

We have also been proactive in engaging with the Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council on a host of issues to improve our pavements and roads. Swanland Road has undergone major improvements to the paths and verges, and the pavement on St Albans Road by the Church has been repaired. We also continued to work with Hertsmere and the County Council over fly-tipping issues and have had several major tips cleared. We have also arranged the refurbishment of the Hertsmere Garages in Brookside which now look much better.

We attended the Planning Court hearings into the Aggregates Site next to Romani House. Although the National Planning Inspectorate sadly overturned Hertsmere Borough Council's Enforcement Notice, our Clerk has since met with the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the site and he has promised to add his voice to the calls for Hertsmere to fight on and we have already written to Hertsmere Enforcement.

We have continued to increase community engagement with more use of the Council's

Facebook page which as a reminder carries all formal notices, including Planning Applications so residents can be made aware of applications in a timely manner. Book Swap has continued to run on the 3rd Friday of the month, and we distributed Warm Spaces charity bags to many residents over the winter.

Our Clerk has now become the Secretary to the South Mimms Village Hall Charity and is working with them to improve community cohesion at events like the recent Coronation Celebration. The Parish Council has also supported the South Mimms Village Hall Charity with a grant to refurbish the flooring.

Going forward we hope to strengthen ties between South Mimms and Ridge and we plan to support the Ridge Village Hall Charity to install free wi-fi there also, to enable meetings to be held in both locations and still be available on Zoom.”

Part 3 – General Parish Council Business

10. There were no representations on planning applications.
11. It was noted that the Clerk hasn't had a response to her letter to Hertsmere Enforcement regarding the overturning of the Borough Council's Enforcement Notice on the site next to Romani House. Issues regarding the site were shared by residents. It was also discussed that tankers from the site have been accessing the emergency standpipe behind St Giles Church to steal water. A resident has already informed the Police and Thames Water.
12. The Clerk stated that she was making progress in recovering the funds in the dormant Ridge Bank Account and explained that these would be ringfenced for use on projects based in Ridge.
13. SM&RPC thanked the Village Hall Committee for their efforts with the Coronation Party. It was noted that the Clerk has secured a further £400 of funding for the event from Hertfordshire County Council which will be passed onto the Village Hall Treasurer for the South Mimms Youth and Community Account.
14. It was noted the next regular meeting will be Thursday 1st June, then 6th July, with no meeting in August.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for attending and with no other business the meeting ended at 8.30pm.