
SMISBY PARISH NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

Parish Council News

Mike Cuming

The best recent news is that a volunteer has stepped forward, and we have happily co-opted Stuart Lowe onto the Parish Council. We are permitted a total of only five councillors, yet we must have three present to make a quorum for any meeting; that's why we have had to alter the dates of some meetings lately, the COVID alleviation to meet online having regrettably lapsed. Welcome, Stuart, and thank you.

Everybody is welcome to attend our meetings and there is always a space for public comment. We invariably go to the pub afterwards for more informal communication should you wish to join us there.

Recent activity includes the maintenance of the Jubilee field equipment, where fallen branches have been cleared, the boundary hedge pruned and repairs carried out; the recent issue of road racing on the A511 (now dealt with by the Police, but only following our vigorous campaigning); continuing Community Speedwatch activity on the B5006; and the successful challenge to get the Heath Lane/B5006 junction accident blackspot dealt with. We have been campaigning to get the existing 40 mph speed limit along the B5006 extended further North to include the dangerous Heath Lane crossroads and it seems we may be getting some progress with that.

We are still engaged with East Midlands Airport on two separate consultations, these being the periodic noise action plan and the one-off aircraft flight path review. In both instances we are currently waiting for the next phase of activity to begin – which will lead to the eventual public consultation phase.

Parish Council Meetings are normally at 7.30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of alternate months although the September meeting is on the 22nd owing to holiday clashes.

Parish Councillors

Chair Mike Cuming 07747841348
mike.cuming@smisbyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Vice Chair Gemma Dickens

Councillor Richard Brooke

Councillor Stuart Lowe

Councillor Janet Sullivan

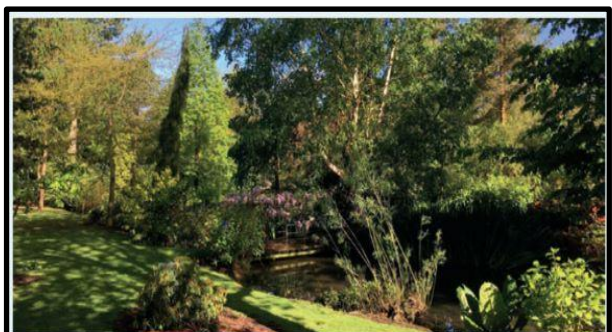
PC Clerk is Caroline Crowder

clerk@smisbyparishcouncil.gov.uk

07745 512128

Arising from recent local government regulation please note that the PC website is now www.smisbyparishcouncil.gov.uk and the councillors/clerk have dedicated email addresses.

Please note: This website and the PC noticeboard at the Village Hall are the only formal channels for Parish Council communications. There is a Parish WhatsApp group and Smisby Village Facebook page for informal communications, however not everyone has access to those.



BLUEBELL ARBORETUM AND NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb summer flowers/ foliage! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com

Community Speed Watch

The Speedwatch group continues to be active and has recently taken part in the National 'All Out' day initiative, including five sessions at various times throughout July 15th. 1,206 vehicles were observed during a total of 3 hours 55 minutes at the roadside. Of these 282 vehicles were speeding, including 105 vehicles exceeding 46 mph (the fastest was 68!) who would have got a fine if Police enforcement had been in progress. In fact, they were lucky and will just get a letter instead to remind them what the limit is.

So, 23% of the cars were speeding, and 9% would have been fined if they had been caught by Police enforcement. That's five cars passing per minute on average all day and one significant speeder every two-and-a half minutes. The data show that the volume of traffic is gradually rising and although the percentage of speeders (and the average and highest speeds) is slowly falling, we're still seeing a gradual increase in total number of fast vehicles. Be careful there!

The good news is that the modest reduction in speeds seems to have had the effect – so far – of converting actual accidents into near-misses; so we clearly need to keep it up.

More volunteers are ALWAYS welcome; please contact Mike Cuming in the first instance, or come and have a chat if you see us active.



You can see our high-tech equipment including the 'pursuit' wheelbarrow, the sunshade and our long-suffering mascot, named only after parish-wide consultation... PC Darth Radar

East Midlands Airport and aircraft noise nuisance

It is common for residents to ask a Parish Council member to pass along a complaint about noisy aircraft and they will always do so, however it is worthwhile to note that the airport takes more seriously those complaints which are sent in by a variety of different individuals; they monitor the total number of complaints and ALSO the total number of complainers.

At present Smisby has a high score in both respects. Whilst this system may have certain drawbacks (eg it will tend to downplay the validity of a single complaint) it does reinforce the value of making the effort to report aircraft noise nuisance on each and every time it troubles you, and for reports to be submitted by those who feel strongly, and not just by a handful of willing representatives but in fact by everyone who is troubled by the issue.

It is extremely easy to register a complaint to EMA (for low flying, night flying, flying frequency etc) using this link: <https://complaint-eu.emsbk.com/ema8>

It takes only moments to do, and the form is amazingly easy to fill in. Alternatively, you can email the airport directly via: community@eastmidlandsairport.com so if the noise affects you please do take the time to report it.

Parochial Charity News Paul Cooper, Gemma Dickens & Elizabeth Sturgess

Over the past few months, the Trustees have continued to support local projects and community initiatives across the parish. Recent funding has been provided towards flowers at the Village Hall and across the village, support for local community groups including the WI, and grants to help young people from the village take part in educational and leadership opportunities. The Charity has also continued its work on maintaining and managing its land and property assets to ensure they provide long-term benefit for the community.

The Trustees have been reviewing their governance arrangements, updating data protection processes, and progressing plans for a new charity website to improve communication with parishioners. In addition, preparations are in hand for this year's Christmas Lunch and Hamper Scheme, which introduces a new format in line with current Charity Commission guidance.

As always, the Charity is committed to using its funds to support projects and activities that benefit the residents of Smisby. The Smisby Parochial Charity remains dedicated to serving our community and responding to the evolving needs of our residents. We encourage you to stay connected through the website for updates and ways to get involved. Please get in touch with clerk Sheila Heap on sheila.heap@icloud.com if you would like to know more.

Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch & Hamper Scheme – Sunday 13 Dec 2026

This year, Smisby Parochial Charity is making some changes to its Christmas hamper scheme. In line with current Charity Commission guidance and the Charity's governing documents, eligibility will now be more reflective of the current State Pension age. As a result, the scheme will be available to Smisby residents aged 65 and over.

For Christmas 2026, we are pleased to invite eligible residents to a Christmas Lunch, with a festive hamper provided to all attendees. Please save the date and look out for your invitation in due course. These will be hand-delivered to residents who received a hamper in previous years, using our existing records. To help us with planning, invitations will include a simple RSVP slip for you to return.

If you are aged 65 or over and do not receive an invitation, or if you know someone in the village who qualifies but may not be on our list, please let us know so that we can ensure no one misses out. Contact email for the Charity is sheila.heap@icloud.com

We recognise that some residents may have mobility or transport difficulties. If attending the lunch may be challenging, please get in touch and we will do our best to help with transport arrangements where possible. Alternatively, a hamper can be delivered to those who are unable to attend due to mobility issues.

We look forward to celebrating the festive season together.

Smisby Christmas Party

This will take place on Saturday 5 Dec 2026 starting at 5 pm and going until 11 pm. There will as usual be food, good company and entertainment later in the evening. Invitation forms (booking is essential!) are included with this newsletter.

Smisby Allotment Association

Smisby Allotment Association Contact is: smisbyallotments@yahoo.co.uk

Sarah Rushman

Smisby Parochial Charity - Volunteer Trustee Wanted

Would you like to make a difference in your local community? Smisby Parochial Charity seeks a new volunteer trustee to help oversee the Charity's work supporting local residents, village initiatives, community projects, and educational grants. Trustees help guide the Charity's future, oversee funds responsibly and ensure support reaches those who need it most.

No previous trustee experience is required. We welcome people from all backgrounds who care about the village and are willing to contribute their time, ideas and enthusiasm. Knowledge of Smisby and an interest in community life would be an advantage.

The role is voluntary, unpaid and involves attending a small number of meetings each year. There is a job description available for more context, and a short application form is available. For an informal conversation to find out more, or to apply, please contact the Charity, either through any trustee or the Clerk, Sheila Heap on sheila.heap@icloud.com or 07535 292839.

Please help support the future of our village by becoming a trustee.

Ashby Camera Club

Larry South

Ashby Camera Club is now well into its summer programme, which has included visits to Derby BMX, the equestrian centre at Sudbury, and motorbike racing at Darley Moor, to name just a few.

We had a stand at the Ashby Show to promote the club to the local community and acted as the official photographers for the show.

Our programme can be viewed on our website www.ashbycameraclub.co.uk and we welcome anyone who would like to join. Email chairmanacc@gmail.com

Our indoor programme at Smisby Village Hall starts on Wednesday 9th Sept.

If you are interested in photography and would like to improve your skills, why not give us a go?



Jubilee Field

The process of identifying better or more effective ways of using the Jubilee Field is still going on. The first phase of suggestions have been evaluated and some have been costed. For example, the possibility of completely renewing the play area has been explored and the likely costs would be close to £150,000; the Parochial Charity has generously indicated that it would be able to support such works but not to the full cost, in which case alternative plans or fund-raising would be needed. The decision for the moment is therefore to conduct a 'refresh' of the existing equipment at modest cost only until such time as a long-term coherent plan is agreed; which may take some years. The Parish Council priority is to get the plan right, even if it takes some time.

Please contact Janet Sullivan with ideas / suggestions / offers of support, on 07557 961105 or via email: janetsullivan@gmx.com

Smisby Defibrillator: the defibrillator at the Village Hall can be accessed by anyone. The PC decided NOT to have it in a lockable cabinet on the basis that if it's needed it will be needed in a hurry. But an alarm WILL sound if it is removed from the cabinet. This can be reset with code 2131

Smizfest 2026

The event was a big success with perfect weather and a substantial sum raised for the Air Ambulance. Well done to all those who volunteered to set up, run the event or just supported it – but special thanks to Mark and Carol Parnham for hosting it.

Football field refurbishment

Many thanks to Ollie Keen (pictured) for submitting a costed proposal to the Parish Council to refurbish the goalposts and nets on the football field. The PC were very happy to have a plan to work with, and through the generosity of Councillor Charlotte Hill and her community fund we were able to refurbish both ends and also the big back-net which stops wayward balls from being punctured in the thorn hedge.

The costs were kept to a minimum by a crowd of volunteers (in the usual manner) as you can see...



Smisby Village Hall

Ron Walker

For further information see : <https://www.smisby.org.uk/svh-home>

We have welcomed Richard Parker and Jane Mack onto your village hall committee. Many thanks for stepping forward, Richard, and for Collette for prodding him! We are lucky to have such dedicated villagers in our parish.

Your committee has been active in continuing to maintain the high standard of our hall, which has been re-painted inside plus the exterior doors and entrance porch re-varnished. The painter even found time to spruce up the telephone box, which has already attracted favourable comments.

New Event: The RVS memory group have decided to move to Ashby - we now have a Chair Yoga session on Tuesday mornings to fill that spot - if anyone would like to try you'll be very welcome at 10.00am.

For bookings please contact Karen Walker
kazza621@gmail.com or 07970789205





Having lived in South Derbyshire for nearly 10 months now I have noticed.....

- It's more rural than I first thought
- I have not yet got used to the noise from planes, bells or geese!
- How passionate and caring the villagers are about their communities.

The variety of talents and skills around that never ceases to encourage and inspire me as I listen to people's stories.

If I had a £1 for every time someone asks me, 'If I'm settled yet?' I'd be a rich woman. It takes a whole year to fully appreciate the lay of the land. However, my husband and I are enjoying our new location and have felt appreciated by all four congregations.

We're trying to promote a greater sense of unity across the benefice hence the new logo and magazine, as well as identifying unique points for each church. St James has previously been the most traditional of the four parishes and the new PCC wants to engage with residents to discover more about what activities and services you would like to see in the future.

Gary Margerrison our dedicated and long-standing Church Warden/Treasurer decided to step down in April so the 18 regular members are rallying together to ensure the continuing viability of St. James. Spiritually we'd really appreciate your support, so can you pray for us? Physically, could anyone help with maintenance and upkeep? Financially, we do not have enough income to keep going long term so any contributions to cover the costs of cutting the grass would really help as we want to keep the churchyard being the tranquil and beautiful place it is for all time. St James is your parish church and everyone is welcome.

Highways

Please continue your support of the Parish Council and the community by reporting issues via: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk> as you come across them. Anyone can do this and it is dead easy ... please do try it.

You can report streetlight issues, hedge problems, POTHLES (always a favourite) and much else. On the topic of potholes, there seems to have been a noticeable reduction in these and the delay between getting them reported and repaired seems to be falling, too. At a recent Parish Council meeting we were advised that there about 2,000 potholes being repaired per week in Derbyshire at present, and more importantly that 89% of them are now being repaired 'properly' so that they shouldn't fall to bits again soon.

Anyone can report a problem – you don't need to be some sort of official to do so.

Secretary at Smisby WI for sixteen years.... but seems like yesterday that I joined a small group meeting at Cynthia Massey's bungalow while the village hall was refurbished. Now we have a lot of other WIs visit us and we have some lovely comments like "my word, they're posh loos".

Lesley Smith is a favourite guest of ours; last year she entertained us as Florence Nightingale and later Dr Gareth her husband gave a very interesting talk on the Witch Finder General. I didn't live in those days and I have a dog, not a black cat but I do think we must have cast a spell; membership is stable at sixty so we must be doing something right as several WIs have dwindling numbers or have even closed.

Our outings this year have been in keeping with the ethos of the WI which is to broaden our knowledge and learn new things. Notty Hornblower gave a superb fashion show of vintage clothes in 2024 so last year we went to Tissington to see the well dressings and then on to her museum of clothes. We visited the City of Liverpool for a day in September.

At our monthly meetings we invite a speaker to come along to give a talk and we try and get a diverse mix of people. Martin Cooper from the Air Ambulance told us how he raised £25,000, and additionally we raised a further £200 towards his next goal. Ellen, a retired police officer, let us hold her very heavy stab-vest, and the retractable baton. Kathy Powis gave a talk on the Mary Rose Tudor Warship in Portsmouth and that's our next overnight stay to visit the ship and museum.

We have made one hundred bags containing a toothbrush and toothpaste which were donated to local charities, to encourage children and adults to look after their teeth. Fifty fiddle muffs made by the crochet group have been distributed to care homes and Royal Derby hospital for people with Alzheimer's. and we are also making bags with toilet items inside for the Women prisoners at Foston Prison.

My son and grandson will soon be doing a sponsored walk up Ban-eye-Bruck-Ein-Og (Brecon Beacons) - between them they have raised over £2,000 for Alzheimer's UK. I crocheted over 300 hundred Forget me not flowers which were attached to a board over the Village Hall porch to bring it to people's attention what a terrible disease this is for the sufferers and carers.

We do have a website page (<https://www.smisby.org.uk/womens-institute>) kept up to date by me and Marie South which gives a clearer picture of how very active we at Smisby WI are.

Smisby Web Pages <https://www.smisby.org.uk>

The village website is a treasure trove of useful links and information from many of the groups and associations within the village including St James' Church, Women's Institute, Parochial Charity, Village Hall, and Parish Council.

The Parish Council agenda, minutes and contact details are all published on their own website, together with their accounts and audit information.

There are also links to council sites such as highways reporting, speeding reporting and contact details for planning and accessing the council. In addition, a link to easily access the police neighbourhood alert line.

Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

Much of Smisby lies within a conservation area and this brings certain obligations regarding building maintenance and materials, and the pruning or felling of trees. These obligations are actually not very restrictive but they do exist and over the years there have been a number of inadvertent breaches of protocol which invariably end up being either embarrassing or expensive. If you are new to the village it may be prudent (or interesting) to view the Smisby Conservation Area Character Statement – on the following link:

<https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/conservation-listed-buildings-and-heritage/conservation-areas>

Further, several buildings are 'Listed' with additional obligations for themselves and their immediate neighbours. Whilst it is rare for the Parish Council to have any comment regarding planning applications, the PC is always consulted by SDDC planning department/Conservation Officer about any applications within the parish. Our experience has been that the planners are very helpful, and we suggest early engagement with them regarding any planning matter.

District and County Councillors – note that local government restructuring means that this will change over the next 18 months.

Your County Councillor is Charlotte Hill at Charlotte.Hill@derbyshire.gov.uk

Your South Derbyshire District Councillors are:

Kerry Haines Kerry.Haines@southderbyshire.gov.uk

James Lowe James.Lowe@southderbyshire.gov.uk

For those who enjoyed reading this newsletter, previous issues are also available on the website! The newsletter is sponsored by the Parochial Charity and the advertisers below.

HELP!!!! Editor/Complier required:

The newsletter is issued approximately three times per year and the editing task usually falls to a member of the Parish Council.

Unfortunately the PC members don't always have the time or expertise to do the job, so a volunteer to take on this periodic task would be most welcome...

Please let us know if you can help!

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