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# SMISBY VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

Your Parish Council

October 2023

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Hello Smisby! We haven't published a Newsletter for a while and meanwhile quite a lot of newcomers have arrived in the Parish therefore this is longer than usual to bring lots of topics up to date.

## Paper or electronic?

You will notice that this is a paper copy, the first for a while. The Newsletter always used to be printed, but to save cost the Parish Council decided on a trial period of electronic copy via the Smisby website (with paper copies placed in the Village Hall phone box). Whilst this hasn't generated much comment (two parishioners requested ongoing paper copy and no-one else said a word) the result of the trial has been inconclusive.

We are therefore sending a paper copy this time. For info, the previous (quarterly, and posted) paper newsletter was costing the PC almost £700 per year. This one-off edition will only cost about £60, as most copies will be kindly hand-delivered by volunteers. There is more below about how the Parish Council spends your money locally but the big picture is that we have only a small budget which needs to be spent wisely.

**We need your views! Please let the Parish Council know**

## How does the Village/Parish work?

### How does the Parish function?

There are 123 households in the Parish, which includes the village itself and several farms and outlying rural properties. Drawn from these - and number of people who don't live in the parish at all - there are groups of volunteers who serve on the various committees/Parish Council. The composition of those committees evolves over time and most of these committees have seen quite a turnover in recent years as long-serving members have retired and newer volunteers have been recruited.

### Who organises what?

The statutory administrative body is the Parish Council comprising five (elected, volunteer) councillors and there is also a Parochial Charity - again, run by volunteer Trustees who retire and are replaced in rotation. There are additionally a number of clubs and societies using the Village Hall. The church is part of the Melbourne Diocese managed by its own PCC, and the Churchwarden is Gary Margerrison.

### Smisby Parish Council

You are currently served by five Parish Councillors, Chairman Chris Taft, Vice-Chairman Mike Cuming, Richard Brooke and Gemma Dickens and Janet Sullivan. Three councillors are required for a quorum to make meetings and decisions valid. Normal meetings take place on the first Tuesday of every second month in the Village Hall at 7.30pm. Parishioners are very welcome and encouraged to attend. The meetings vary in length from 30-90 minutes with 60 minutes being average.

There is always an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and it is usual for our two South Derbyshire District Councillors (James Lowe and Kerry Haines) plus our County Councillor (David Muller) to attend to give updates and field questions. It is usual for councillors to go to the Smisby Arms afterwards should you wish to join us there.

Next meeting dates: November 14 2023 at 19.30 and 2nd Tuesdays in January 2024, March, May etc.

Our wonderful Parish Clerk is Caroline Crowder, who can be reached at: [smisbyparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:smisbyparishclerk@gmail.com)

### Parish Money: The 'precept' and how it is spent

The Parish Council receives much of its funding through council tax paid in the Parish. The 2023/24 precept levied on the 123 households in the Parish totals approximately £6,800. Contributions are also received from the Parochial Charity and other sources for specific projects, giving a total income of c.£10,600. This year we have certain capital projects to pay for and expect to hold cash reserves of about £2,000 at the year end.

Our single biggest regular expenditure is the playing field which costs c.£4,000 per year in rent, maintenance and grass-cutting. The field is owned by the Parochial Charity and leased to the Parish Council. Administrative costs amount to about a further £3,800 and we spend about £1,500 per year on assorted maintenance, tidying and insurance.

## Jubilee Grounds - A New Vision

As many of you will remember the recreation field in Smisby was renamed the Jubilee Grounds as part of previous celebrations. This is currently enjoyed as general recreational space, with a football pitch and play equipment. The current play area equipment was donated about 20 years ago and gets regular inspections and maintenance, however it is now showing signs of age and may require replacement fairly soon. The field is run and maintained by the Parish Council, so if anyone notices a defect then please kindly draw it to the attention of Caroline Crowder, our part-time clerk.

The Parochial Charity also have funds available to help make any necessary changes at the Jubilee Grounds to reflect the current and changing needs of the residents of Smisby.

### We need your input!

The playing field has not been used a great deal over recent years, although it is getting more regular use lately, and following discussions at recent PC meetings it seems desirable for formulate a plan to use this space to best advantage. A number of ideas have been tentatively proposed and the next step will be to form a working group tasked with investigating options. At present the Petanque area and wildflower patch have fallen into complete disuse, the play area will soon require refreshment, there is no shelter and the football pitch (which was recently levelled and treated at a cost of about £5,000) is only recently seeing some use. It may be the case that the facilities merit overhaul or even complete redesign.

We would like to set up a working group with members of the parish and Parish Councillors.

- to assess how the field currently gets used;
- to discuss the longer-term uses of the field;
- to look at how we might change and improve the current facilities; and
- whether we should look at making areas more accessible by, for example, levelling or terracing the ground or improving the access approach.

If you are interested in being part of this exciting group, then please contact one of the Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk or come along to a Parish Council meeting!

## Smisby Parochial Charity – What is it?

The charity exists to hold funds in trust arising from land donated to Smisby some time ago. It invests the capital and can spend the annual income as it sees fit – split half for the benefit of the parish and half for St James church.

Numerous, generally modest, grants are made to support residents of the parish and to support parish events and facilities.

The trustees are always on the lookout for worthwhile causes to support and welcome applications (see village website for the link)

The Charity has a particular interest in acquiring land in the parish for long-term protection.

Trustees are Claire Hynam, Simon Barnett, Rob Hounslow  
Paul Cooper

Clerk Sheila Heap 01530 414179

**See later in this newsletter the latest update**

## Flooding and rainwater issues

Heavy rain can cause issues with stormwater running down the hilly roads, particularly Forties Lane, which in turn can be slow to drain away towards Ashby from the low point in Main St.

The Parish Council has long been campaigning with Highways Dept and the successful outcome so far is a (frustratingly slow) programme of inspections and repairs. The ongoing periodic maintenance is being monitored to make sure it actually happens, too.

The drains on Forties Lane have been greatly improved already - and more work is promised. You may see Highways or Severn Trent staff at work from time to time.

## Copper Beech near the Church

The tree is situated on the site of the ancient pinfold (where stray animals were kept until claimed) which is owned by South Derbyshire District Council ("SDDC") who therefore also own the tree. We understand it has been there since 1922, having been planted as a memorial associated with the Great War. Recently a very large branch fell and blocked the road, and SDDC advised the PC to move the benches and fence off the area whilst they consulted a tree surgeon.

The report (available on the Smisby Website) stated that the tree is unstable and at risk of complete collapse, and with several cracked branches. The report further states that the tree is likely to die altogether within 20-30 years, if it doesn't fall down first, and that no-one should be allowed to sit underneath it under any circumstances. As a result SDDC's preferred course of action is to fell the tree in the autumn and replace it with a similar tree. The candidate trees would most likely be Oak, Ash, Hornbeam, Beech/Copper Beech. SDDC would be able to plant a tree of approximately 5 metres height and it seems the most sensible course of action will be to replace like with like and have a similar tree - unless there are any objections. Please note that Smisby does not own this tree nor the pinfold but our collective views can be represented to the SDDC and will be taken into account. No-one on the PC is a tree expert and our intention is to be guided by the SDDC tree surgeon.

## East Midlands Airport: Flight Path Routes Consultation

There is currently a "Future Airspace Programme" exercise which may result in changes to the arrival and departure flightpaths from East Midlands Airport. The Parish Council is engaged with this consultation which will result in a public consultation phase early in the New Year 2024.

### East Midlands Airport: 4-yearly Noise Action Plan Consultation

The Parish Council is currently engaged with East Midlands Airport regarding their Draft 4-year Noise Action Plan for the period 2024-2028 to mitigate and manage aircraft noise nuisance. The PC response can be found on the village website from which you will see that we are pleased they are making progress, but overall rather disappointed by the lack of ambition in their plans. Meanwhile EMA has placed a portable noise monitor in Smisby for summer 2023 to collect data and help update their 'noise contour map'.

### East Midlands Airport noise complaints

A number of parishioners have raised aircraft noise complaints with the Parish Council. Here is an extract from the [eastmidlandsairport.com](http://eastmidlandsairport.com) website under 'noise' which gives you the means of complaining directly to the airport.

"Aircraft Noise can be a cause of disturbance for some local residents. Whilst we do everything possible to minimise our impacts, you may wish to contact the airport to either raise concerns or seek further advice on our operation.

We also provide an online tool (WebTrak) that enables you to see air traffic in the vicinity of East Midlands Airport. [View WebTrak here.](#)

You can also submit a noise complaint directly through our WebTrak system.

You can report aircraft disturbance by filling out our online [Noise Complaint Form](#), by emailing [community@eastmidlandsairport.com](mailto:community@eastmidlandsairport.com) or by using our automated complaint line on 0845 108 8540.

If you wish to write to us directly, our address is: Flight Evaluation Unit, Pathfinder House, East Midlands Airport, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2SA

## Social Events

There have traditionally been a large number of social events in Smisby and although Covid significantly reduced events, it is only slowly recovering.

There is no formal social committee but **please note that absolutely anyone is welcome to organise an event!**

Never assume that someone else is already doing it (or might be offended) or that it's not your place to start something. Please come forward and join in, it is quite literally the more the merrier! Most events are held in the Village Hall which is run by its own committee and can be booked very cheaply by village residents for private or village events.

## Village Hall: Committee, Events and Bookings

The Village Hall committee are - like more or less everything in the village – volunteers who in this instance oversee the booking of activities and maintenance of the building. They are:

**Ron Walker (Chairman), Suzanne Jones (Secretary), Claire Hynam (Treasurer), Barbara Ball (Bookings Clerk), Pat Barnes, Sarah Rushman, Janet Sullivan, Ian Rice, Hazel Salt**

The Village Hall has regular bookings in addition to the Parish Council, and these are currently:

- Ashby Art Club - <http://www.ashbyartclub.org/> meets on Monday evenings and alternating Wednesday mornings
- Ashby Camera Club - [www.ashbycameraclub.co.uk](http://www.ashbycameraclub.co.uk) on Wednesday evenings
- Smisby WI - [Smisby Womens Institute](http://www.smisbywomensinstitute.org.uk) meets on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday evenings
- Karate Club - Contact Alan Hair 07791 802065 or [h eskakarate2023@gmail.com](mailto:h eskakarate2023@gmail.com). This club is small and friendly and very much open to new members. Meets on Saturday mornings from 9 until 10 for juniors and 10-11 for adults. Current cost is £6 for juniors and £7 for adults
- Quilting – this is private group, not a club
- Canasta – Meets on Monday 2pm - 4pm and Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm
- Ashby Music and Theatre Group
- Remember Me voluntary memory clinic
- Dancing Dogs

## South Derbyshire District Council: maps, footpaths, right-of-way and hedge/grass cutting

The PC has recently received a number of questions from parishioners about topics including 'who is responsible for which grass-cutting and which hedges?' and 'where exactly are all the footpaths and right-of-way?'

These questions fall outside the PC's remit so they have been referred to SDDC. It transpires that SDDC mapping portal is slightly out of date; this is being rectified and you may expect an accurate revision in due course, with clearer definition of who is responsible for what, and where the paths all lie.

## **Smisby Community Speedwatch**

The Parish Council has supported the establishment of the Community Speedwatch group, which has been running since August 2021 in conjunction with Derbyshire Police. The objective is to reduce speeds and noise – primarily on the B5006 – and to reduce the number of accidents/near-misses on the junction with Main Street. There have been frequent near-misses and approximately one collision per year, linked to restricted vision splays and the high vehicle speeds with many drivers seemingly oblivious to the 40mph limit from Ivanhoe Roundabout to north of Smisby.

The goal of Speedwatch is to have a gradual impact on driver behaviour (primarily through education although the Derbyshire Casualty Reduction Enforcement Support Team (“CREST”) do carry out enforcement activity too. Speedwatch holds sessions of monitoring activity to record data (which we hope will support the eventual installation of Speed Indicator Devices) and also the details of any vehicle exceeding the amount in which they would have qualified for a fine and/or points had it been observed by enforcement officers. Any driver exceeding that speed on the B5006 will get a letter from the Police to remind them of the speed limit and they are placed on a county-wide database for a year. A second ‘booking’ in Derbyshire in that year will result in another letter, the third will result in a personal home visit by a uniformed Police officer.

Note that in order to be ‘bagged’ a driver will need to ignore the large fluorescent signs which are erected a few hundred yards upstream in both directions during speedwatch activity, also ignore the hi-viz-clad volunteers who are in full view, and STILL be doing 47MPH or more. It is, of course noticeable that many drivers visibly slow down just as soon as they see the dayglo – or the speed gun!

Smisby Speedwatch has been running for almost two years and has averaged one session per fortnight. 11,500 vehicles have been observed with a gradual slow reduction in speeding levels and now 1,000 letters have been sent out by the Police! There has only been a handful of ‘second’ letters and only one personal visit; and virtually none of the drivers contacted lives locally. The percentage of speeders has fallen slowly from 15% to 11% and we hope that this trend will continue.

Volunteers receive training and more are always welcome. The activity is actually quite fun and social. We have deckchairs and have plenty of time to chat and soak up the sun. We don’t have to book every single speeder since the primary purpose is educational rather than punitive. So long as they have seen us they are probably thinking about the speed limit... and we know that the vast majority of drivers are seemingly unaware that it’s a 40mph limit.

## **Highways, potholes and road maintenance**

The Parish Council liaises regularly with the various local authorities, as a result we do occasionally get significant works carried out. The most recent is the footpath repair to the B5006 and village footpath resurfacing. Potholes are always an ongoing issue and residents tend to mention these to Parish Councillors as a way of alerting Highways Dept. This is fine but you can also do it yourself very easily by following the link:

[Report a road fault - Derbyshire County Council](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/report-a-road-fault/report-a-road-fault.aspx) (or go to <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/report-a-road-fault/report-a-road-fault.aspx>)

or just typing “Derbyshire Do It Now” into your search engine. You can also use this to report fly-tipping, streetlight faults, etc.

## 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 as a matter of course always consulted by SDDC planning department and the 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.

Entrance to the Bluebell Nursery Arboretum is free to local residents and the autumn colours are spectacular:



### 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

## Ashby Art Club Report

Ashby art club continues to use the Village Hall every Monday evening and on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays.  
Ashby Art Club

Ashby Art Club meets in Smisby Village Hall on Monday evenings and the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings each month. Monday evening sessions pause during August, but the Wednesday morning sessions will still take place.

At Easter we held our annual exhibition in Ticknall. It was highly successful, with excellent attendances and sales. We gained some new members from the exhibition and more have joined since.

Our monthly demonstrations by local artists continued with 3 in May/June. We also had 1 weekend workshop. Again, well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

See website [www.ashbyartclub.org](http://www.ashbyartclub.org) or Facebook/Instagram/Twitter for more on the Club, and other local information sites for events.

## Ashby Camera Club Report

Ashby Camera Club meets at the village hall on Wednesday evenings through the 'winter' season with speakers, competitions and practical sessions. The club welcomes photographers of all abilities and technologies and, whilst not a teaching club, tips and advice are shared amongst members.

We have a very full and varied programme:  
<https://www.ashbycameraclub.co.uk/programme>

If you have an interest in photography and would like to improve your skills as part of a friendly and welcoming group, then please get in touch using the Contact form for more information, or just come along to one of our meetings or events.



The allotments continue to be well supported with a very stable community. All the plots have been occupied for the last 12 months and are now maintaining a waiting list. Currently there are not many tenants from the parish - please do get in touch if you would like to have a look round and I would be happy to help. We will be holding a community maintenance day in the spring and all are welcome to come and see our work.

Sarah Rushman

[smisbyallotments@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:smisbyallotments@yahoo.co.uk)

## News from St. James's Church – Autumn 2023

Old buildings like St. James's Church need constant attention, maintenance, and repair. You may have noticed that during 2023 we have had quite a lot of repairs made to the building and the church yard wall. Repair work is costly, and we have to use materials – stone, mortar, etc, that are sympathetic to its age. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is grateful for the continued support of the Parochial Church Trust (PCT) which provides grants to enable this work. The grants from the PCT can only be used to fund essential maintenance and building work; the church cannot use these grants for normal running costs which we have to pay for from regular giving, donations, and fees.

The PCC uses the services of the charity BETEL to maintain the church yard. BETEL helps addicts and former offenders into work and we are happy to support them. They have looked after the church yard for a number of years now.

The church recently celebrated Harvest Festival when it was beautifully decorated, and we enjoyed listening to the children singing. The fresh produce given during the service went to the Bus Stop Café in Swadlincote which provides fresh, hot meals on wheels to 45 people every day as well as breakfasts and lunch in the café itself. Two big bags of tins, jars and packets went to Community Support, also in Swadlincote, who run a food bank and drop-in centre. Thank you to everyone who provided these gifts to be shared.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> November we will have our annual Service of Remembrance at 5.30 pm and as long as the weather is clement we will go down to the Village War Memorial for part of this. Everyone is welcome to come, it is quite special to hold this service as it gets dark.

The church Carol Service will be on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 5.30 pm and then on Christmas morning there will be a service of Holy Communion at 9.00 am. Do come and join us even if you aren't Church of England; and if you don't want to receive the bread and wine that's fine, come up for a blessing or just be there and enjoy a brief period of peace and quiet!

Canon David K Edwards

07530114169 or [axuw41@talktalk.net](mailto:axuw41@talktalk.net)

## SMISBY WOMENS INSTITUTE

Once again Smisby Women's Institute has had a busy six months since our last report. The Christmas party in the village hall was a fun evening with the very entertaining John Parnell who has appeared on Britain's Got Talent. John showed us how to make dogs, cats, swords, and many other items out of balloons, a very entertaining evening and of course a buffet supplied by our members, not forgetting the Christmas mulled wine.

Lesley Smith gave us a talk about Nell Gwyn - the mistress of Charles 2nd - in March and she made Nell come alive. Lesley was dressed in the most beautiful costume with the flaming red hair Nell was famous for.

The dates for the coronation were very late being published and we did wonder how we could celebrate this historic event. We contacted Lesley to see if she knew someone who could give us a talk about one of King Charles ancestors, and yes, her husband Dr Gareth Williams gave talks on Charles 2nd. And what a fabulous talk he did, it tied in very well with the talk that Lesley had given, he was dressed for the part and who would have known it was not Charles 2nd himself standing there in the village hall telling us about his life. For both events, a buffet provided by members made the evening very special.

We have been to Moorcroft Pottery & Trentham Gardens and Broadway & Sezincote, with other outings planned for the coming months, as well as our monthly meetings, craft mornings & Striders and Strollers walk. We continue to be a very active WI with 60 members. There is a waiting list for new members however this does not apply to parish residents. We do have an excellent website which is regularly updated by Marie South, with pictures of both Nell Gwyn & Charles 2nd in their costumes, plus information about Smisby WI. [www.Smisby.org.uk](http://www.Smisby.org.uk)

Suzanne Jones, Secretary Smisby WI

## Smisby Parochial Charity Update

Smisby Parochial Charity is well down the road in changing charitable status from Charitable Trust to Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This major step is recommended by the Charities Commission. What it may mean is that our founding document (Scheme of Arrangement) could be amended to reflect the more modern practices that we are accustomed to today. It does not mean that there will be any change to the support we give to the Smisby Parishioners, but it might alter the processes we have to go through to get that support in place – ie, make it easier!

Currently, we only have 4 Trustees to undertake all the charity's work and that can be quite time-consuming, albeit very rewarding. Our charity legal experts have suggested that we could look to increase the number of Trustees if we thought it would help our workload and, importantly, make becoming a Trustee of the Charity more appealing to newcomers!

We have been delighted to support the Parish Council in its funding of the pavement repair outside the Poplars, opposite St James Church. The Parish Council had arranged this work and paid it initially from their own funds. We, in turn, are now reimbursing that cost to the Parish Council.

On the support side, we are well into our Christmas Hamper planning and this year, now that we have reduced the qualifying age to 60 for both men and women, we have a record number of applicants. We continue to support individual support requests from Parishioners and are always on the lookout to help more people in need. If you know of anyone in need please let us know through our clerk.

Finally, at our last meeting we were delighted to approve student funding, towards accommodation costs from three residents.

**Our website (pages on Smisby.org) has all the information required with easy-to-complete forms to download for all funding applications.**



# It's (nearly!) Christmas!!!!

## Christmas Party

The Smisby Christmas gathering will be held on Saturday 25 November in the Village Hall. It's the usual format - Carols at the Church starting at 6pm following by the lighting of the Christmas illuminations at the War Memorial tree.

Thereafter there will be food in the Village Hall, where we expect to see a 'special visitor'. Invitations (with full details) will be issued sometime during October.

### Landscaping and Horticultural machinery for Sale or Hire

**Kilworth**  
 Kilworth Machinery Ltd  
 Anwell Lane, Smisby  
 Tel: 01530 412690  
[www.kilworthmachinery.co.uk](http://www.kilworthmachinery.co.uk)

- Rotavators
- Tractors
- Mowers
- Log Splitters
- Saw Benches
- Sweepers



<p><b>Parish Councillors</b></p> <p>Chair Chris Taft                  Councillor Richard Brooke                  Councillor Mike Cuming                  Councillor Gemma Dickens                  Councillor Janet Sullivan                  Parish Clerk Caroline Crowder (4 hours per week)  <a href="mailto:smisbyparishclerk@gmail.com">smisbyparishclerk@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Parish Council Meetings at 7.30</b>                  (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of alternate months)</p> <p>14 November                  9 Jan 2024 [subject to quorum]                  12 March 2024 [subject to quorum]                  14 May 2024 [subject to quorum]</p>	
<p><b>Smisby Village Web pages</b>  <a href="http://www.smisby.org.uk">www.smisby.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Smisby Village News</b></p> 	<p><b>Defibrillator code</b>                  Outside the Village Hall - not locked                  but will trigger an alarm, silenced                  with the code 2131</p>
<p><b>Parochial Charity</b></p> <p>Trustee Claire Hynam                  Trustee Simon Barnett                  Trustee Rob Hounslow                  Trustee Paul Cooper                  Clerk Sheila Heap      01530 414179</p>	<p><b>Village Hall Committee</b></p> <p>Chair Ron Walker                  Bookings Clerk Barbara Ball      07526 268698</p>	
<p><b>County Councillor</b>                  David Muller  <a href="mailto:David.Muller@derbyshire.gov.uk">David.Muller@derbyshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>District Councillors</b>                  Kerry Haines <a href="mailto:Kerry.Haines@southderbyshire.gov.uk">Kerry.Haines@southderbyshire.gov.uk</a>                  James Lowe <a href="mailto:James.Lowe@southderbyshire.gov.uk">James.Lowe@southderbyshire.gov.uk</a></p>	