MINUTES OF SPARKWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on 10th December 2019 at Sparkwell Primary School

**Present**: Cllrs May, Lee, Peacham, Milford, Taylor

Dawn Johnson (Clerk)

**In attendance**: Cllr Hart (DCC), Cllr Baldry (SHDC)

**Part 1** (Open to the Public)

**184/19 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Pearson-Bunt, Cllr Small, PCSO Di Summers, Cllr Thomas (SHDC)

**Resolved** that the apologies be noted.

**185/19 Agreement of the Agenda between Parts I and II.**

Councillors noted that one item of business would be considered in Part II of the meeting

**186/19 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**187/19 Police Business**

As requested at the last meeting, the Clerk I contacted our PCSO to ask if she could provide more detail in her report. The Police no longer send out full parish reports as the information can be accessed through [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk), although that information is a month behind. However our PCSO is happy to keep providing the brief report for us.

Report for November:

* Theft of Motor vehicle – 02/11/2019 – Sparkwell – Undetected
* Criminal damage to property under £5000 – 06/11/2019 - Sparkwell Zoo – Unable to proceed with enquiries
* 2 x Assaults recorded – 06/11/2019 – Sparkwell Zoo – Unable to proceed with enquiries to prosecute
* Attempt Burglary on construction site – 16/11/2019 – Deep Lane – Undetected
* Burglary other than dwelling – 18/11/2019 – Langage – Under investigation
* Burglary other – 18/11/2019 – Langage – Undetected
* Logs recorded over the month road surface water on A38 nothing of note or concern in Sparkwell logged.

**188/19 District Councillors Business**

Cllr Baldry delivered his report:

1. Currently in Purdah – very little has happened in the last month.
2. The Marquis Caravan planning application has been withdrawn.
3. There has been nothing further on the Placelands application for x25 dwellings. Cllr Baldry will be opposing the application.
4. He raised the traffic problems in Lee Mill due to DCC works which are having an adverse effect on local businesses. It is causing serious traffic delays and queues back to the A38.

Cllr Hart said the lights should be controlled manually and he will check on this.

Cllr Peacham said that the PC needed to find tree planting sites within the Parish. One that stands out is Boringdon Camp which has been closed to the public for 3 years. Cllr Peacham has contacted the Tree Officer at SHDC who confirmed that there are no plans to re-open the fort; the closure still stands to protect heritage asset. The PC believed that this is an ideal site to plant trees (4.8 hectare site = 4,000 trees), the trees could be planted in the area where sheep are kept to keep the grass down and not on the protected part of the site. He asked whether Cllr Baldry could follow this up.

**189/19 County Councillors Business**

Cllr Hart delivered his report:

1. The travellers at Langage are being moved off very soon.
2. The flooding under the Venton Bridge has meant that Venton now has a bus to take the children to school. It started running today and is for a year. Highways are looking to see if they can generate another route.
3. The Lee Mill traffic lights are for gas main works. The next phase in the New Year will mean blocking New Park Road off, therefore the “rat run” through New Park Road will not be available and cars will also have to be moved from parking on the road.
4. Lee Mill – DCC has spoken to the Highways Agency about a new road junction.

Cllr Peacham raised the problem of the flooding at Venton Bridge and the need for a drainage scheme. Cllr Hart said that £40/50,000 had already been spent on laying a pipe but it didn’t work. The PC did not believe that a pipe had in fact been laid nor a gulley, the drain goes to a soakaway which is totally silted up. There was discussion about what was needed, specifically a pipe across the field to discharge into a water course. Cllr May stated that the cost of these schemes always seemed miles away from the reality.

Cllr Hart will investigate what work was carried out.

**189/19 Open Forum** – to enable residents to ask questions of the Parish Council.

1. Drakelands Mine Update - DCC confirmed that the mine has been sold to a company called Tungsten West. We have also now had communication from the Executive Chairman, Mark Thompson. Tungsten West is a newly formed British company who are undertaking feasibility studies into the technical and economic viability of re-opening the mine over the next 12 months or so. Mr Thompson has stated that little will change on the site for the next few months and is to attend the next Parish meeting on the 14th January 2020.

A Liaison Meeting has been arranged for the 30th January 2019.

Cllr Hart said that they were working on a new test crushing and separation plant, and looking at mining in a different way.

Cllr Milford asked about whether there is due diligence on the new company.

Cllr Hart stated that this is a new company created for this job so there is no clarity; the individuals involved in the company have been working in Africa. Due diligence is being done, they have to put up a bond and assurance of a back plan. They are working on digging around the outside to sound out where the minerals are and how much bigger it can get. They said Wolf were mining in the wrong way and were now talking about electro magnets to suck out the ore that has tungsten in and reject the rest which will reduce the amount of crushing. They believe they can do better than 40% retrieved. They are hiring former Wolf employees.

Cllr Peacham said that PC will be looking for the same safeguards on noise etc.

Cllr May stated that the experience of the meeting with Hargreaves and the Environmental Agency was that the EA rep was ill informed. If Tungsten West are getting information from those sources, then he is not confident of the quality of the information. The Parish has always been aware of the ore and that it is a national resource so mining will go on; the problem is that it has not been done properly and we do not want the same to happen again.

Cllrs Hart and Baldry left the meeting.

There was further discussion about the Parish meeting in January.

**Resolved** that the Council will prepare a note setting out the background and do necessary research.

**190/19 Matters Arising**

1. Minute 157/19 (c) “Bus stop” on verge in Birchland Road

At the November meeting the Council had resolved to appoint a local contractor to lay textured concrete. The Clerk had contacted someone who can do the job in January and will contact Cllr May to arrange.

1. Minute 174/19 Devon County Council (Traffic Management) Permit Scheme Order reference IMR/B16273-5781

The Clerk had asked for more clarity from DCC who referred us to the link and the draft Plan.

1. Minute 167/19 Hedges on the slip road at Lee Mill near the bus stop

The response from DCC Highways is that they checked and there has been some cutting carried out by Highways England on the Plymouth bound slip, which looks to have dealt with the initial concerns. If not, let them know.

1. Minute 169/19 Flooding at Langage

The response from DCC Highways is that the issue was exacerbated by the blocked gullies on the road to Mount Pleasant and has been dealt with. It has been a long standing problem in the area but there is no scope to improve what little highway drainage that is already there.

1. Minute 173/19 S106 benefits Langage

The s106 is a £50,000 contribution towards highway modelling for future highway improvements. Contributions sought have to relate to the development proposed, therefore the contributions for commercial developments relate to landscaping matters, highway contributions etc rather than affordable housing or open space.

1. Minute 175/19(a) – Appointment of Community Lengthsman

We have appointed a Lengthsman and have sent the relevant letter of appointment and risk assessment. He commenced working on 27 November and since then has worked through Sparkwell and Hemerdon clearing drains, all except the square in Sparkwell below the church (Beechwood Cross) where he had a problem finding where it emptied, and Venton Bridge.

Venton Bridge is in such a bad state that it is not possible for him to remedy. He said that there is so much build-up of silt it needs to be put into a lorry and taken away. Even if this was done and he could find the drain, then all he could do was a “token gesture” in clearing. There is serious work by DCC needed on this. In the interim he suggests that we could ask a local farmer if he could remove the silt using his tractor and bucket. The Lengthsman could supervise this as obviously the farmer isn’t Chapter 8 trained.

***Action*** *– Clerk to speak to the Lengthsman and ask him to go ahead.*

Going forward for he will go around the area once a month to check on things but in the meantime the Clerk and Councillors have his telephone number and he asks that we let him know if there are any problems and he will go and sort.

***Action*** *– Clerk to publicise the appointment of the Lengthsman on Facebook and the Parish Pump and ask that residents notify us of any issues.*

Cllr Peacham said that the Lengthsman was lifting heavy drain hole covers on his own.

**Resolved** to purchase a Drain Buddy Gully Opener

***Action*** *– Clerk to speak to Lengthsman to establish that it would be useful and, if so, make the purchase.*

**191/19 Broadband**

Cllr Pearson-Bund had sent apologies but had provided a report:

We now have 97 registrations for the Sparkwell community fibre bid and have gone to BT for final costings.

Before doing so, Cllr Pearson-Bunt asked the BT rep for advice on the merits of one combined bid or of two separate bids (Sparkwell and Hemerdon). His view was that the two locations were too far apart and he couldn't see any benefit in doing a combined bid. He seems to think that Hemerdon should have a viable bid in its own right, especially given the number of businesses.

**192/19 Tree Planting**

Cllr Peacham had prepared and circulated a report regarding Climate Change Mitigation Tree Planting. There was a full discussion including:

* He had spoken to the Woodland Trust and the Director of Moor Trees.
* Landowners can get government grants to plant woodland, however the minimum to plant a new woodland is 3 hectares (x7 acres.
* Moor Trees will process applications on behalf of landowners and then the grant goes to Moor Trees who plant the trees.
* Volunteers grow seeds on to trees and then volunteers plant.
* His trees are bare rooted and need to be in by April.
* Woodland Trust trees can be in plastic pots but do we want to use plastic?
* Moor Trees want large sites and the cost is £300 a day for his team to plant 1000 trees in a day. However if there is a lot of preparation work, it could take 2 days.
* There are no large sites of Parish land available apart from Boringdon Camp.
* You cannot plant on common land.
* We should talk to landowners to tell them about the grants available.
* The three corner field at Hemerdon could be used to plant woody type small trees along the boundary plus various clumps of trees. It is owned by Hemerdon Village Hall - 200/300 trees approx £1 each, £2.50 for tube and stake = £3.50 per tree.
* Suggested that we have a “Parish planting day” with Cllrs and Clerk volunteering
* He suggests the PC buys a stock of container trees, say a holding stock of 100 trees, so we can go to landowners and point to fields where trees have been lost and replant. The trees can be kept in a store at Hemerdon.
* We should publicise this and anyone who wanted/needed a tree or small amount of trees could have them.

**Resolved** to proceed with Hemerdon planting.

***Action*** *- Cllr Peacham will advance*

**193/19 Review of Policies**

1. Grievance Policy
2. Disciplinary Policy

**Resolved** to approve the Policies.

**194/19 Minutes**

Councillors considered the minutes of the meeting on the 12th November 2019

**Resolved** **unanimously** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th November 2019 be approved.

**195/19 Planning**

None

**196/19 Road & Snow Warden**

Snow bins are all full.

**197/19 Chairman’s Business**

1. TPO New Park Road, Lee Mill Bridge - Oak – remove epicormic growth on trunk.

Cllr May will attend.

1. The Clerk said that she had been progressing the emergency plan and wanted to ask whether there was a potential night time landing site for the Devon Air Ambulance and whether this is something we wished to pursue further? It was felt this was not needed at the current time.

**198/19 Correspondence**

1. Email from SHDC regarding a review of parking permits in the South Hams. Concerns have been raised that the current system encourages the purchase of permits, and that permit holders are filling up car parks, depleting the number of parking bays available to both residents and visitors to a town or village.

They anticipate reporting to Executive Members in respect of permits on 19th December and a public consultation will be undertaken after this.

**199/19 Finance**

(a) Councillors present received and considered the draft Budget for 2020/21 which had been circulated.

**Resolved** unanimously that the report be approved

1. Councillors present received and considered the draft Precept Demand for 2020/21

**Resolved** unanimously to approve the Precept Demand at £10,299.85 which represented a zero percentage rise.

1. Councillors present received and considered the bank reconciliation and budget analysis for November 2019.

**Resolved** unanimously that the reports be approved

**200/19 Payments and Receipts**

1. The Council considered the receipt and payments list circulated by the Clerk.

**Resolved** that the report be approved.

**201/19 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 14th January 2020 at 7pm at Hemerdon Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting

Signed ……………………………………………………………….

Name ……………………………………………………………….. Date …………………………………………..