

MINUTES OF SPARKWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on 12th September 2023 at Hemerdon Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Hartley, May, Webb, Lee, Hutton-Fellowes, Serpell Denman, Sophie Jones (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Edie (SHDC), Cllr Hart (DCC), Andrew Nisbet (TW), Hayley Holt (TW), PC Tim Wills (DC Police), 1 MOP

Part 1 (Open to the Public)

082/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Thomas (SHDC)

083/23 Agreement of the Agenda between Parts I and II

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

084/23 Declarations of Interest

None

085/23 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Hart presents a monthly update to the council. There is currently a £9million overspend, with the budget being just under £700million. Devolution is still on the cards and Cllr Hart is currently in talks with ministers. There have been cats killed within the area due to speeding on a private road. Unable to add speed bumps due to it being owned privately. Also, there are trees in Lee Mill obstructing a window from a nearby property. The trees belong to the council so they will endeavour to resolve this issue. Cllr Hart says the county is under a lot of pressure within Special Educational Needs. In the last 8 – 10 weeks a new Director of Childrens Services has been appointed. They are working with the NHS, a new integrated care service wards and the Chief/Deputy Executive on the ward. They plan to meet at the end of October 2023.

Cllr Hartley asks if SHDC are in danger of being in the same situation as Birmingham due to overspend. Cllr Hart reassures the Chair and there is no substance to Devon being suspect to insolvency.

Cllr Hart asks if there is an update regarding funding for Lee Mill slip road. Cllr Hart says Highways aren't enthusiastic about this project, despite it solving the problem of traffic on the main road. It's currently in the hands of Highways England. There is no suspected timeframe, but they will keep working on it. The positive is that they already have the land which makes it a more viable project.

Cllr Hart left the meeting at 19.15

086/23 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Edie provided the update from SHDC. There is a Planning Reform consultation that has been launched regarding permitted development rights. The consultation process is ongoing to gauge feedback and public opinion. It may make it easier to convert buildings to residential use. To be successful there must be a clear demonstration that there is a failure for the business to function. Cllr Edie asks if it's worth SPC sharing opinion on the Planning Reform with local MP.

087/23 Public Forum

PC Tim Wills introduces himself to the SPC and asks if there are any issues they would like to raise. He will be attending the meetings when he can and the SPC will receive monthly briefs from the Devon & Cornwall Police.

Cllr Hartley asks if there is an update on the Lee Mill slip road. PC Wills says there haven't been many road traffic collisions there, so it is not considered a high risk area. Cllr Hartley has concerns regarding the speeds so asks if PC Wills would visit the area at rush hour. A member of public (MOP) that attended the meeting had concerns regarding a neighbour's sewage spilling into their garden numerous times. It has been reported to SWW but nothing has been resolved. SPC had objected to the original planning application. Cllr Edie has taken the details from the MOP and will look into it.

088/23 Hemerdon Mine

Andrew Nisbet and Hayley Holt from Tungsten West (TW) attended the SPC meeting to provide an update on this month's developments at Hemerdon Mine. Andrew informed the council that they have been using the short-term funding provided, £3million was drawn down in August and a further £3million a few weeks ago. The finance facility has asked for TW to cut costs further which has resulted in a further 13 roles at risk of redundancy. This consultation period will finish at the end of September 2023.

Cllr Hartley has asked how long the most recent £3million will last. Andrew says until Christmas 2023. The decision regarding the permit will be made within the next month or so, which will enable TW to talk to financiers and complete projects to start operations. The process will take approximately 6 months, with the hope that money will arrive at the end of Q1. Once TW have a permit, they will be more appealing. Once the funding lands, it will take about 12 months building prior to operations. TW are looking at mid-2025 to commence operations.

Cllr Hartley asks if they plan to re-recruit the staff that they lost. Andrew says HR have plans and a strategy, but they are unsure how willing staff will be to come back once made redundant.

Cllr May asks if the work on Sparkwell Hall car park is still going ahead. Hayley says unfortunately not as the money is gone. She feels it's a huge shame.

Cllr May asks about an article featured on Plymouth Live regarding the mine having a 27-year life, despite planning only agreeing until 2036. Andrew agrees that 2036 is what the planning permission states.

Cllr May asks when the liaison meeting is. Hayley has a date so will email everyone the details shortly.

Andrew informs the council that the planning application for the aggregates has been submitted in the second or third week of August. They are currently validating documents and will be out on the public register at the end of this week. There is a 3 or 4 week window where comments can be made. Everyone who submitted comments on the last planning application will be notified of its submission. A Freedom of Information can be submitted and all documents will become available.

Cllr Hartley asks how confident TW are that Q2 of next year will be positive for the business. Andrew says that the quality of work they have done on LFN is excellent. There is nothing more they could do. The issue compared to Wolf Minerals is vastly different. He is optimistic that the permit will come in the next month or 2, and the funding will follow. The Section 73 is slightly different as TW don't need that permission for the next few months. They appreciate it is a highly emotive topic for everyone, so are expecting it to be pulled into an intense process with Plymouth City Council. TW have had a difficult year, with 2 rounds of redundancies. They are confident this will go ahead.

Cllr Webb asks if TW plan on reassessing the suitability of the new road as it's notorious for speeding, especially motorbikes. PC Wills said there is a police presence on that road to deter any speeding, and it's currently used for training officers in traffic and speeding. It's a high-risk road. Andrew said that TW plan on submitting road safety improvements along that road. Potentially a speed camera and a reduction in the speed limit.

TW left the meeting at 19.49

089/23 Planning

- a. 2604/23/HHO – SPC will support with conditions

PC Wills left the meeting at 20.02

090/23 Minutes

Councillors considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 11th July 2023
RESOLVED – unanimously that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 11th July 2023 be approved and signed.

091/23 Climate Change and Biodiversity

No updates, will revisit next month

092/23 Road & Snow Warden

a. Speeding within the Parish

Concerns were raised regarding the speeding near Welbeck Manor. Traffic calming measures need to be introduced.

ACTION – SPC to write a letter to Welbeck Manor to inform them of the speeding issues.

It was also noted that there are various road markings around Sparkwell that need to be redone. There is also a concern of speeding through the village.

ACTION – Clerk to research availability of flashing road signs, or any funding that may be available.

Cllr May raised the absence of signage at Venton.

ACTION – Clerk to contact Cllr John Hart regarding reinstalling signage at Venton.

093/23 Tree Warden

A tree may need to be removed in Henry Close, Lee Mill.

ACTION – Clerk to contact Cllr John Hart regarding removal of the tree.

094/23 Parish Assets (Bus Shelters, Benches, etc)

No update, will revisit next month

095/23 Parish Pump

Cllrs discussed the local Parish magazine. It was decided that the SPC would discuss funding again if the Parish Pump resumes publishing and approaches the council.

096/23 AirBand

The wayleaves for the installation of new AirBand poles within Hemerdon and Sparkwell were discussed. Clerk has forwarded the paperwork to the relevant site landowners.

097/23 Chairman's Business

Cllr Hutton-Fellowes was contacted by a resident regarding the village being dementia friendly. SPC support the Four Rivers Dementia Alliance, and it was suggested they be invited back to the next meeting to discuss how to raise awareness.

Cllr Hartley asked for an update regarding the Ocean City Football team. Cllr May said that Sparkwell Hall had a committee meeting recently, in which there was an open forum. The football team were discussed as they can no longer use the football pitch. Cllr May said the pitch is owned by DCC and administered by Sparkwell School. The school had received complaints, which the committee at Sparkwell Hall tried to resolve. There were safeguarding issues with the village hall toilets being used by members of the public during football games, and the car park was full during match days. It was concluded that the football team needed a bigger space but could continue using the pitch for practise sessions. The minutes and correspondence from that meeting has been sent to representatives at Ocean City.

098/23 Correspondence

Clerk has been in correspondence with the Cllrs prior to meeting to discuss enrolling on a CiLCA course.

RESOLVED – Cllrs unanimously agreed for Clerk to enrol in the October 2023 intake for the CiLCA at a cost of £450.

099/23 Finance

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the budget analysis report and bank reconciliation for August and September 2023.

100/23 Payments and Receipts

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments for August and September 2023.

101/23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **7pm on Tuesday 10th October 2023 at Sparkwell Parish Hall.**

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Name Date