

MINUTES OF SPARKWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on 8th November 2022 at Sparkwell Parish Hall

Present: Cllrs Peacham, Pearson-Bunt, May, Hartley, Serpell Denman, Webb, Lee, Hutton-Fellowes, McEwing, Harvey, Sophie Jones (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Thomas (SHDC), Angie Scott (TW), Mark Thompson (TW), Neil Gawthorpe (TW), 4 MOP's

Part 1 (Open to the Public)

168/22 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Millford

169/22 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.

170/22 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Hartley will step out of the meeting during planning application DCC/4324/2022

171/22 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Hart wasn't in attendance but emailed a brief to the Clerk;
Have very little good news to report tonight, am still looking at how to make more savings to produce a balanced budget for DCC for next year. We are also having to seriously look at the County Council finances for the remainder of this year, when we set the budget for the current year in February inflation was under 2% and the Council budgeted for a 2% wage rise for our staff. We now have inflation at 10%. The local government settlement on staff salaries is going to cost over £7million EXTRA this year and needs to be reflected in our budget preparations for next year. Material prices and contracts are rising by up to 20%/25%. Which is why I have been talking about this to the media last week after briefing MPs first.

Slightly better news, Covid cases are plateauing. Regarding hospitals, very few patients on oxygen but still a number of patients admitted. There is still a real worry about the Flu virus for later this winter. Please get Flu and Covid injections if you are eligible - this is your best protection against getting seriously ill over the next few months.

Hopefully we will be shortlisting candidates for interview for our next Chief Executive later this week. Have had a good number of applicants and are now taking up references.

172/22 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Thomas presented his monthly brief to the council. He said the brown bins have finished now, if anyone has been missed then please let them know and they'll arrange a collection. Also, the paid-for service has started now, it is £49 to subscribe.

Cllr Hartley has asked why the details of the Lee Mill planning application isn't available online. Cllr Thomas has said he will investigate it.

Cllr Thomas left the meeting at 20.39

173/22 Public Forum

David Rowland introduces himself to the council members and discusses a planning application that he currently has ongoing for his land at Choakford Farm. The planning application has been discussed in a previous meeting by another MOP (Minute 113/22) and David would like the opportunity to respond to any issues or queries that may have been raised. Regarding dust pollution, there is none as the road into it is tarmacked. The rest is gravelled but he has never had any complaints from neighbours. Any objections that have previously been submitted to DCC have been dealt with. Within Minute 113/22 the MOP said that more trees have been taken down than planted. Twenty years ago, as part of the original planning permission, David says he had to plant indigenous trees which he did and they are now quite substantial. Only two trees were taken down due to being rotten. There were concerns about the bat population being affected by a chimney installation. Ecology reports have been completed on everything and many visits from South Hams Council. Regarding noise pollution, an independent consultation/survey has been done to check any noise from the chimney. They discovered more noise from the A38 than the chimney. Any noise that is generated has been filtered. David says the site has B8 planning and retrospective planning for the shed. Planning officers have visited the site and everything has been agreed and signed off. David invites the councillors to visit the site and he will show them around. He says it will be used just for caravans, not a show ground and estimates the caravans will go in and out of the site perhaps twice a year. David has concerns that a MOP can visit a SPC meeting and discuss objections to an application rather than submit it direct to DCC.

Cllr Peacham says that members of the public are invited to attend. The councillors will respectfully listen and allow them the space to speak their minds. The council then form an opinion of their own.

Cllr Hartley also reassures David that the comments made by the MOP in minute 113/22 were to seek advice rather than make allegations.

Two MOP's also spoke to the council regarding their current Class Q Planning Application. They mention that there have been objections regarding the equestrian use of the shed and emphasise that it has solely been used for the storage of hay, fodder and general agriculture.

Cllr Lee says that the question is whether it is equestrian or agricultural, and that this is something for SHDC to answer.

The 4 MOP's left the meeting at 19.27

174/22 Hemerdon Mine

Angie Scott presents the monthly brief from the mine. She introduces the council to Mark Thompson, the Executive Vice Chair for TW, and Neil Gawthorpe, the Chief Operating Officer for TW. Angie recaps the update she emailed to the councillors prior to the meeting

and explains it's limited as they are restricted on what information they can reveal and when. Cllr Peacham tells Angie he feels the format of the emailed update is much improved. The information was much more constructive and meaningful. Although it didn't include any details regarding tree planting. He also notes that he has seen deer within the deer fencing recently. Angie says they are aware that deer get in but can't see where or how. Cllr Peacham feels that the tree planting is simple and that TW have a statutory duty to do it but so far nothing has been done, not even a plan. Mark disagrees as 42,000 trees were planted by the previous operator. A tree survey was completed a year ago and submitted to DCC, TW received no response so feel they have done all they need to do. Cllr Peacham asks for a plan, regarding which area will be planted and when. This will enable SPC to have realistic expectations of when it will be done. It will also mean that SPC don't chase TW about tree planting unless they have missed the goals mentioned in the plan. Mark promises to undertake a proper review but admits it hasn't been a priority to him at the moment. Cllr Peacham feels that it should be a priority as it's a way to mitigate the environmental damage caused by the mine. Mark says that TW want a good relationship with Sparkwell and the residents so will make the tree planting his personal priority.

Cllr Peacham also wants to discuss the SPC objection to the current planning application from TW regarding the uplift of vehicle movements from 20 to 200 per day (DCC/4314/2022). He feels that the numbers produced in the application just do not fit, and that TW haven't listened to SPC at all. Mark disagrees and says if the numbers are impossible and do not fit, then why is there such concern over it as the trucks just will not move.

Cllr Harvey asks how long the mine is planned to open for. Mark says 22 years. Cllr Harvey wonders if TW can undercut the primary aggregates and potentially put them out of business within the 22 years' time frame. Mark feels that is an assumption.

Cllr May asks if there will be another planning application regarding the removal of the screens. Neil said no as the screens won't be moved at the moment, they are decommissioned though. The previous agreement to completely remove the screens from the site was made by Max Denning. Cllr May reiterates that this way taken in good faith and feels quite concerned about it.

Mark asks what the residents of Sparkwell think about TW's offer of free energy, produced by wind turbines. Cllr Peacham says they produce LFN so there is no support. WHO have recognised that the LFN produced by wind turbines can be detrimental to health. Mark asks what if it was solar generated energy instead? Cllr Peacham says that if a proposal is made then SPC are happy to discuss it.

Mark is keen to reset the relationship with SPC and the residents, and asks how he can do so. Cllr Peacham says that if TW plant the trees, decommission the screens and drop the planning application then that would be a good start. Mark responds and says that as of today, TW will withdraw the Section 73 planning application and begin the planting of trees. Cllr Peacham reiterates that TW will withdraw the Section 73 planning application to increase the trucks to 200 per day. Mark agrees, and confirms that's correct.

The councillors agree that withdrawing the section 73 will improve things massively.

Neil also informs SPC that TW will control the blasting from the mine. They will consult with the SPC and show how it can be done responsibly. TW are currently modelling the LFN and any audible noise. They are advanced in their progress and are doing everything possible to

mitigate the noise. They will continue to meet the levels that have been set by the EA and once met will continue to improve it. Neil says that what TW are doing to mitigate LFN has not been done in the UK before. They have a consultant from Australia and hope to be pioneers in LFN.

Cllr Peacham discusses a meeting he recently had with RheEnergise regarding an upcoming project for renewable energy. He asks in TW would also be interested in it. Neil says yes, they're happy to talk about it and that they're also looking into other sources of renewable energy. They discuss the idea of energy clubs using the energy generated from solar panels. Mark says that if SPC can find a consultant they would be happy to get involved.

Mark finishes his update with his wishes to start afresh. SPC agree and thank Angie, Mark and Neil for coming to the meeting.

Angie, Mark and Neil left the meeting at 20.30

175/22 Minutes

Councillors considered the minutes of the meeting on 11th October 2022

RESOLVED – unanimously that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th October 2022 be approved and signed

176/22 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- a. Cllr McEwing provides an update on the Sparkwell woods. They are currently looking for someone to help with heavy lifting jobs but are struggling. They may have to hire a contractor to help once they clarify the specific work that needs to be done. Cllr Hutton-Fellowes said they will look into hiring someone to help but in the meantime will buy some daffodils to plant on the edge of the bank.
- b. Sites for tree planting will be revisited next month as there is a national shortage of trees. The idea of tree nurseries has been discussed but there are too many deer within the area for it to be successful.
- c. Cllr Harvey will continue discussions with Rob Sekula.
- d. Cllr Peacham discusses the RheEnergise meeting that he recently was involved in. SPC are interested and will discuss the next step. The councillors also discuss other ideas of renewable energy that may potentially be available within the parish making use of the mine shafts, the lay of the land, solar energy, etc.

177/22 P3 Scheme Footpaths

Footpath 5 within Sparkwell will be closed due to fixing the footbridge (9th November 2022 until 13th November 2022). There will soon be a meeting with Ros to hand everything over.

178/22 Neighbourhood Planning

Cllr Hartley has almost completed the application; he will meet with Cllr Peacham to answer the final questions.

179/22 Road & Snow Warden

Cllr Harvey said there are 2 potholes within the parish which are fixed/due to be fixed. SPC currently have 4 tonnes of salt in stock for the winter, but no snow or ice is forecast for the next month. He asks any potholes within the parish to be reported and they will be fixed.

Also, regarding traffic calming, Cllr Harvey suggested purchasing a flashing speed sign to emphasise the speed limit within Sparkwell.

180/22 Tree Warden

No update this month.

181/22 Parish Assets (Bus Shelters, Benches, etc)

No update this month.

182/22 Planning

- a. 3330/22/CLE; No Comment
- b. 3211/22/FUL: No Comment
- c. 3281/22/VAR; No Comment
- d. DCC/4324/2022; Sparkwell Parish Council recognise the request of a delay to the works required in condition 23. We support the need for a delay, but the bund should be built before any operations start and the planting must be in the first season following.

183/22 Chairman's Business

Cllr Pearson-Bunt discusses the concept of providing warm spaces throughout winter. There has been discussion on setting up a rota for events and places that can be used. Any event that is organised needs to have the correct safety/supervision before it can go ahead. Cllr Pearson-Bunt suggests a hardship fund to be created to fund any warm spaces events.

AGREED – Clerk to set aside £50 per venue in the budget for Warm, Safe Spaces.

184/22 Correspondence

All correspondence has been emailed to councillors prior to meeting.

185/22 Finance

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the budget analysis report and bank reconciliation for October 2022.

186/22 Payments and Receipts

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments for October 2022.

187/22 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **Hemerdon Village Hall** on **Tuesday 13th December 2022** at **7.00pm**.

Meeting closed at 22.05

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Name Date