

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

Present: Cllrs Hartley, May, Webb, Lee, Nicholson, Serpell Denman, Sophie Jones (Clerk)

In attendance: Cllr Edie (SHDC), Neil Gawthorpe (Tungsten West), Marica Lyndon (Tungsten West)

Part 1 (Open to the Public)

138/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Hutton-Fellowes

139/23 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.

140/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

141/23 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Hart was not present at the meeting.

142/23 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Edie provides the monthly update from South Hams District Council. Cllr Thomas has requested the new bin for Hemerdon Village. The funding is expected to come from the county budget.

Cllr Nicholson conveyed thanks from the SPC to both Cllr Edie and Cllr Thomas for resolving the issue with the litter bin, and the support they provided regarding the Planning in Principle application from The Miners Arms.

143/23 Public Forum

No public present.

144/23 Hemerdon Mine

Marica Lyndon and Neil Gawthorpe provided the monthly brief from Tungsten West. The restructure within the company has been completed. There is now a remaining workforce of 16 staff members, including 8 staff members who are onsite keeping the area safe. Water regulations are a big issue at present and are dealt with by the same team who cover dust pollution. TW held a series of trials in July 2023 with various noise mitigation techniques, and are working with the Environmental Agency to get the best results. The solutions to tackle Low Frequency Noise are at the cutting edge for this type of technology. The dialogue is currently suspended due to Christmas, but will resume in January with an aim to close the

matter. TW hope the funding will be resolved asap. The Section 73 was approved last week by the Development Committee. The volumes of trucks won't change – there will be 50 trucks a day, 5 days a week. They note that this is potentially 2 years away though, and TW will be improving the B3417 road prior to this.

Cllr May noted that shares have been sold. Neil feels that the share price is irrelevant at the moment as no one will support a company prior to permits being granted. TW raised £6.95million in May 2023, which will last until the end of the year. Once TW has been permitted, more funding will become available.

Cllr May asked if they are planning to be up and running within 2 years. Neil said it's all dependent on permits and staff levels. TW have lost 60 to 70 staff members so will need to get the skills back that have been lost. He also noted that once the permits are sorted, they will update the feasibility study and restart the Local Liaison Group meetings.

Cllr Nicholson asked following DCC approval, at what stage are TW likely to begin road improvements on the B3417? Neil said that the current permission allows for a maximum of 50 trucks a day. Before 150,000 tonnes is exceeded, the road improvements need to be done. TW will have the major funding they need to start the road widening, but they are hoping to have it completed by the end of next year (2024). They are currently hesitant to widen the road prior to speed restrictions being in place.

Cllr Webb asks if TW plan on moving forward with the tree planting that was initially promised? There were also plans to fund the Sparkwell Hall car park improvements. Neil said that he can't give a timescale but the promises still stand. He also notes that on the small section of road that's being widened, more ecology will be put in than removed. Once TW is funded, they will get back to the wider ecological and environmental plan.

Cllr Hartley asks if the 50 trucks per day could be increased. Neil said they have ticked the boxes required for 300,000 tonnes of aggregates and in terms of broad movements that's what it'll be capped at. If the aggregate business gets any bigger then TW will assess other means of transportation.

Cllr Hartley asked if there is a plan that SPC could see in the future regarding a timescale for tree planting, road improvements, etc? Neil said the road improvements are part of a legal document, including statutory dates that TW need to abide by. Once the funding arrives, they will make a timeline for tree planting.

Cllr Nicholson asks if SPC need to make any enquiries with the Environmental Agency. Neil said that TW don't know what's in the draft – a permit that's not workable is not a permit. They are making improvements to make real changes.

Cllr Nicholson asks if there will be an updated draft issued at the 3 week consultation. Neil said the public consultation is for members of the public, not Tungsten West. The conversation between TW and EA is separate to that.

Cllr Webb states that she has concerns with the environmental impact of transporting aggregates further afield. Neil says that Devon has a gap in the market which TW will fill nicely. They have conducted market studies and believe the aggregates can be sold in those volumes. It won't be overnight, but in the first 5 years TW can fill that demand.

TW left the meeting at 19.28

ACTION – Clerk to contact EA regarding attending a future meeting to discuss the draft permit.

145/23 Planning

a. **3858/23/HHO** – No comments

Cllr Edie left the meeting at 19.40

146/23 Minutes

Councillors considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 14th November 2023

RESOLVED – unanimously that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 be approved and signed.

147/23 Climate Change and Biodiversity

No update this month.

148/23 Road & Snow Warden

The Cllrs want to ensure the salt and grit bags are readily available at strategic places prior to any cold/icy conditions.

149/23 Tree Warden

No update this month.

150/23 Parish Assets (Bus Shelters, Benches, etc)

No update this month.

151/23 Chairman's Business

ACTION – Clerk to email Sparkwell Hall regarding Cllr Serpell Denman becoming a representative on the committee.

ACTION – Work towards a Neighbourhood Plan and add funding into the budget for 2024/25

152/23 Correspondence

The Cllrs agreed that SPC would fund a community Christmas tree outside of Sparkwell Hall.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange payment of £80 to pay for 10ft Christmas tree.

ACTION – Clerk to write a letter to Cllr John Hart regarding flooding hotspots within the parish.

153/23 Finance

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

154/23 Payments and Receipts

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

155/23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at **7pm on Tuesday 9th January 2024 at Hemerdon Village Hall.**

Meeting closed at 20.22

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Name Date