

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF SPARKFORD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2026 AT 8.00PM**

Present: Mrs J Cattermull – Chair, Mr R Sealey, Mr P Harcourt, Mr T Tuck, Mr A Quick
In attendance Mrs A Tuck, locum Clerk, Ms Kaye Elston, New Parish Clerk, Somerset Councillors H Hobhouse and K Messenger, 7 members of the public

2026 At the start of the meeting the public were reminded that they had 3 minutes each in which to speak at the start of the meeting, that they were not able to talk once the meeting started, but if they had questions to ask they could do so at the end of the meeting.

A member of the public asked why the LCN meeting was not on the agenda – answer because no one was available to attend from this meeting and that the minutes had not yet been sent out.

He asked what was happening about traffic calming in the High Street, Mrs Tuck replied that Highways England had carried out a survey before the dual carriage way project started, and Ian McWilliams (County Highways) has confirmed that a second traffic survey has been completed and the project team are waiting for the results. It is on our quarterly review. He also asked what is happening about the Emergency Plan – nothing has been done as yet, the clerk resigned and left, and there is only so much we can do, we need an emergency plan and we will get to it, working on a new local plan comes into effect in 2029, Cllr Harcourt has attended a meeting to review and discuss the local plan. Land for building will be released for consultation in April and we will look at it then.

Another member of the public asked what had happened at the meeting the Council had with LVA ref the planning application on the Glebe Land. It's on the agenda later in the meeting..

The Chair welcomed Kaye Elston our new clerk, to the meeting. The Chair also thanked Anne Tuck for standing in as clerk over the last 5 months and getting the Council to a position where we could hand over to a new clerk.

SPC14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Mr L Piper, Mr D Westwood

SPC15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct. None

SPC16 MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting 5th January 2026 were signed as a true record – Proposed by Cllr Sealey, seconded by Cllr Quick – all in favour.

SPC17 CRIME/NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Beta the PCSO has moved to a different area and had asked Jacob Tailby to provide a report but none was received.

SPC18 SOMERSET COUNCILLORS, Cllr Hobhouse stated that in the recent flooding only 5 houses had been reported as flooding, 1 in West Camel, 2 in Mudford caused by the bow wave of a fast travelling vehicle. Mudford has asked for gates to enable them to close the road when the flood water is high to prevent people driving through. The River Cam was not affected as badly this time as the Newt had built a dry dam and built some flood relief ponds in Yarlinton which held the water back and kept us below the flood level. The budget process at County has been delayed, the

government grant of £293m doesn't cover the increase in adult and child social care, the budget and scrutiny meetings have been delayed but the budget needs to be set by mid March. The 114 bankruptcy notice was issued in 2025 and in place again now. Cllr Messenger reported that with an SRA grant West Camel bought a metal boat and have cleared sections of the river of weeds we need to do as much as we can for ourselves. Planning decisions are being taken further away from Councillors. Clerks training on the new planning laws will be available from 10th March 26.

AT

SPC19 HIGHWAYS One side of the pair of chevron boards on the Queen Camel side of Hazelgrove roundabout has been knocked over by a vehicle, this needs reporting to National Highways as they still haven't signed it over to County Highways,

Sparkford Hill Lane – some potholes have been repaired but the road is still breaking away on the South side.

The Bridge at Queen Camel is closed for resurfacing from 9.30-3.30pm on Monday 23rd and Tuesday 24th February.

SPC20 Planning Decisions 22/01598/OUT Land South of High Street, Sparkford 15.1.26 Mr T Canvin, planning Officer Mr Michael Lowe– **Application refused** because of outstanding legal agreements, however the Parish Council were not notified about this. Clerk to write to planning dept.

Clerk

SPC21 Planning Applications. An invitation to speak, for up to 3 minutes, on individual application will be offered – None

SPC22 Planning Issues

26/00014/ENF, 22/02013/FUL, 20/0246/FUL Planning for building a bund at Sparkford Hall. Cllr Cattermull reported this as lorries and diggers were parked on the Highway with no banksman as per the planning conditions. A lorry was there again yesterday and last week a tractor and trailer was driving up Church Road Sparkford from Sutton Farm, Sutton Montis, with soil on board frequently, though it hasn't been seen yet this week. Cllr Cattermull to report again.

JC

APP/E335/w/25/3370208 Land adjoining Mill Cottage. Telephone call from resident, result of appeal should have been back by now. A Bristol planning officer was on site in December, they were advised he was in the area, but they wouldn't discuss it with residents, another inspector is due to look at it on 3/3/26 as the first inspector couldn't deal with heritage issues. Highways cleared the drain outside Conkers but their drive and the garage at Church Cottage flooded again last week. It is feared that the proposed building would make local flooding worse. Cllr Harcourt offered to co-ordinate any further issues to case handler Nadia Hussain. Residents had been asked if the planning consultant can enter their properties to assess the site, but again they won't speak to residents about the application.

DW

SPC23 MATTERS ARISING NOT INCLUDED IN OTHER SECTIONS

a) Daisy Woods Land registry and change of address – Cllr Sealey

- confirmed Stone King have submitted an application which will be complete by December 2026.
- b) Appoint Solicitor to draw up deeds for existing Parish Hall – Somerset Archives have SPC minutes for 1952. Cllr Westwood has an appointment to view their archives on 12th February and will report back to the next meeting.
 - c) Discussion about remainder of A303 Resilience fund, National Highways – clerk has sent photos of the seat in Sparkford Copse, and the owl boxes, also purchased the defib which is to be delivered to Cllr Piper next week, which totals £3,000 out of £4,300. We still have to purchase a picnic bench for Daisy Wood and the Marlow gate to replace the kissing gate by the garages but this will need the permission of the landowner Mr Rankin. Cllr Tuck will speak to Mr Rankin and locate the picnic bench. A resident asked if there was money available if a bench could be put in the Millenium wood this was agreed.
 - d) Councillor Training Courses, Cllr Sealey is attending the finance and general governance in February and Cllr Cattermull is signed up for Charman training on 14th February. Councillors need to do assertion 10 training, if 5 do it together it will only cost £50. Cllr Cattermull will get some dates and send to all.
 - e) Defibs. New Defibrillator to replace one at Sparkford services to be at Good Wood Drive, Cllr Piper has the electrics ready, the defib is paid for and we are expecting delivery within the next week, direct to Goodwood Drive.
 - f) Quarterly Review Clerk has updated latest items so its ready for the new clerk.
 - g) Dog waste bin clerk hasn't ordered it as the fixing needed to be determined before ordering. It was agreed to buy a green bin, the fixing posts and brackets, clerk will order and get a proforma invoice so Cllrs Cattermull and Sealey can pay online,
 - h) Update response to LVA Cllr Harcourt drafted a S106 proposal – our aim was that any S106 money was to go ideally towards a new village hall, should that not happen within 10 years then the money should be spent refurbishing the old Parish Hall.
 - i) New Village hall Land we are moving forward with the settlement Lovells have complied with section 106. Somerset Council have no issues with that. Battens have been instructed to move forward with the settlement and removal restrictions on file and land transfer.
 - j) Love your Countryside Awards any thoughts on nominations? Cllr Cattermull thought of Wyvern Fields Co-operative for ecological land and sustainability award.
 - k) Haynes printing Building/The Old Creamery the front entrance has broken doors, glass smashed Cllrs, Sealey and Harcourt went inside, copper piping has been removed aluminum windows have been removed on the side nearest the railway line its easily accessible and dangerous. Cllr Harcourt found out who owns it, its an Albanian man but the phone number doesn't work and no one can contact him. As resident has offered to make the front door secure, Cllr Hobhouse suggested we put a sign on the door saying closed by the Parish Council in the interest of safety, so if the owner turns up he knows who has done it. Cllr Sealey

TT

AT
JC/RS

JC

and Cllr Harcourt happy to help. **Post meeting Note:- Cllr Harcourt has managed to contact the owner.**

- l) Flooding the water was up to the door step at Mill Farm, Weston Bampfylde. Cllr Cattermull registered to get alerts, there was a large amount of water in the culvert under Church Road and under the River Cam. The ditch at the back of Green Close and the back of the garages goes into the ditch alongside the field to the river footbridge in Mr Rankins field. There is a pipe which gets blocked at the end of the ditch, it may need digging out again to open the pipe into the culvert. The mill dam behind Joss Cottage is kept clear by Somerset Council but they wouldn't extend it to the back of the field and Manor Close. Cllr Hobhouse said the SRA still have money available for grants and maybe we could put together a grant application to get the water away. Need to get a contractors to quote for what work is needed – grants are for up to £20,000.. Cllrs Tuck and Cattermull will arrange to meet Mr Rankin to discuss the drain and the kissing gate access to the footpath. JC/TT
- m) Speed Watch Update 5 volunteers and someone else who lives in the High Street. Police have agreed safe areas to stand and PPE is due to be delivered this week were awaiting dates for the training. Cllr Quick had emailed SID data to Councillors.
- n) Lengthsman – This was a topic of conversation a few years ago with Queen Camel and West Camel Parish Councils to share someone depending on how much work there was to do. West Camel are currently paying £20 per hour each to 2 lengthsman. SCC's offer via Keir was a lot more expensive. Clerk to find out details of Lengthsman from West Camel Clerk so a discussion can take place. Conversation moved onto arranging a village litter pick with Cllr Sealey will arrange, Cllr Hobhouse stated we may be able to get litter pickers from Somerset Council FOC. clerk
- o) Laptop The clerk managed to get the laptop back however it needed too much work on it to make it viable, we had a quote from Ymonda but the Council decided to purchase a new laptop for the new clerk from Somerton Computers as the hard drive had a bigger capacity. Cllr Harcourt took the usb stick to them and they will upload it to the pc. Cost is £532.49 + VAT and the old computer is being donated to charity via Somerton Computers. On the security side we need a firewall as part of assertion 10. Cllr Quick advised to put Norton on the PC. The clerk suggested Cllr Harcourt get a proforma invoice so Cllrs Cattermull and Sealey can pay by BACs for the pc. Cllr Quick will speak to IT to get our new clerk the email access. PH
JC/RS
- p) Sutton Farm there are 3 options with this, to do nothing, to contact the Ombudsman or to take legal action. The Council voted to contact the ombudsman proposed by Cllr Harcourt and seconded by Cllr Harcourt. AQ

JC

SPC23 Financial Matters

- a) Accounts update The clerk gate out an accounts sheet with bank reconciliation.
- b) Update on Agar / accounts 24/25 the clerk now has all invoices so we are close to being able to complete this.
- c) Payments (Mrs A Tuck Locum Clerk, HMRC, The Diocese

of Bath and Wells – playing field rent).

Clerk

SPC24 CORRESPONDENCE We had emails from crime stoppers asking for a grant, also Yeovil Hospital Charity and Citizens Advice all were discussed and it was decided to give a grant of £200 to Citizens Advice as they have helped a number of parishioners in the area in the last year. Proposed Cllr Tuck, seconded Cllr Sealey.

SPC25 PUBLIC QUESTIONS None.

Clerk

SPC26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday 2nd March 2026 at 8pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:10pm

PUBLIC NOTICES

Speedwatch – 6 people have stepped forward to volunteer to get involved with Speedwatch in the Parish, training will take place shortly. If you are interested then please contact the Parish Clerk.

Community events – are you holding an event in Sparkford? Please send the details to the Parish Clerk so that it can be promoted on the parish website and Community Facebook page.