

## Sparkford Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held on  
**Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 2000** at Sparkford Parish Hall

Present: Mrs J Cattermull (Chair), Mr R Sealey, Mr P Harcourt, Mr T Tuck, Mr D Westwood, Mr L Piper and Mr A Quick.  
In attendance: Kaye Elston (Clerk), and fifteen members of the community.

<b>Item 1</b> <b>SPC43</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor H Hobhouse.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 2</b> <b>SPC44</b>	<p><b>Public Session –</b> <b>All comments received from the public were in relation to planning application 25/00522/OUT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member of the public asked if Somerset Planning Department and developer realised by wanting to close the railway footpath it would cut the village in half as well as pushing people to walk onto the road. Network Rail response to this is that crossing a railway line is dangerous and therefore they class the moving of pedestrians onto the road is safer. Network Rail have advised that putting a bridge across the railway line would cost 3.1 million pounds. General public believe that putting a bridge in place should be a condition if planning permission is granted. It is believed that Network Rail have been trying to close the footpath crossing in Sparkford for a number of years. There are three crossings in the parish.</li> <li>• Member of the public believes the alternative route proposed around the road is more risky than crossing the railway line. The pavement is breaking up which is challenging for pedestrians and even more so for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs.</li> <li>• Member of the public has concerns if the application was granted for the current residents in Cherry Blossom Way as there would be large vehicles needing to navigate tight corners in the current development.</li> <li>• Member of the public believes the Drainage Plan is insufficient.</li> <li>• Member of the public raised the reference in the application to Cherry Pie Lane being used for emergency vehicles during he building process. Does not believe that the road would be wide enough to get a fire engine through.</li> <li>• Member of the public believes that if the application was to be approved then conditions would need to be put in place of either the footpath crossing staying in place or put in a bridge. In addition to upgrade the pavements in the village.</li> <li>• Member of the public – road in Cherry Blossom Way has not yet been adopted by Somerset Council and therefore who would be responsible for any damage.</li> <li>• Member of the public - capacity to manage additional sewage is very likely to be a concern.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 3</b> <b>SPC45</b>	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 4</b> <b>SPC46</b>	<p><b>Planning Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>25/00522/OUT Land South of Cherry Blossom Way, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7JW –</b> Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for residential development of up to 60 dwellings (including 35% affordable housing) and associated works. <b>Comments to be submitted by 26.03.2026.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wessex Water and drainage – in 2017 Wessex Water completed a foul water survey in Sparkford and identified a problem. At that time South Somerset District Council advised that no further houses should be built in the village until a Wessex Water scheme which used a hyro-slide was put in place. This scheme has not yet been put in place as it was delayed until 2025-30 capital expenditure scheme. The LLFA commented on 10.04.2025 and expressed concerns. The amended drainage plan dated 04 September does still not address the fact that all treated waste and surface water will be discharged into the southern ditch which is already near capacity during heavy rain. The ditch leads to the culvert under the River Cam which backs up with heavy rain. The over topping of the southern boundary ditch or the attenuation basin will endanger houses in Ainsty Drive and Church Road. Houses in Cherry Blossom Way already contend with surface water run off through their gardens. By way of evidence, houses in Church Road previously unaffected now have surface water run off from the Cherry Blossom development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Councillors are not confident that Wessex Water are able to cope with up to another 60 houses.</li> <li>➤ Councillors acknowledged the concerns raised by the general public and were in agreement that they shared those concerns.</li> <li>➤ Councillors agreed to submit that they still hold their previously submitted objections to this application and also express additional ones as listed below.</li> <li>➤ Closure of the footpath across the railway line they believe will increase the risk of incidents to pedestrians walking as they are being redirected onto the High Street which does not have adequate pavements. There have been no incidents on the railway crossing at Barrow Crossing for pedestrians.</li> <li>➤ Drainage as stated above in terms of Wessex Water survey back in 2017 and lack of work to rectify the issues identified.</li> <li>➤ Travel assessment takes Phase 2 of the development through an unsuitable route.</li> <li>➤ Road in Blossom Way has not been adopted yet by Somerset Council.</li> <li>➤ Any mitigation if the application to be approved would be to build a bridge over the railway track and the cost of this could be discussed and negotiated through the percentage of social housing which is currently at 35%.</li> <li>➤ Concerns raised around wildlife in the area that could be harmed. Somerset Council need to confirm that the development meets their bio-diversity policies.</li> <li>➤ Does this development fit with Transport Impact and Provision of Open Spaces policies.</li> <li>➤ Does it contravene Public Rights of Way.</li> </ul> <p>Councillors agreed to <b>OBJECT</b> to this application for the reasons listed above. Clerk to draft objections, circulate to councillors and submit by end of day on 26.03.2026</p> <p>If the application were to be granted councillors would request the following mitigating actions to be put into place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build a bridge over the railway track and the cost of this could be discussed and negotiated through the percentage of social housing which is currently planned in to be 35%.</li> <li>▪ Road adopted in Blossom Way prior to construction traffic commencing their work then brought up to standard for construction vehicles and up to another 60 houses being in place that will use that route.</li> <li>▪ A wildlife and newt survey to be undertaken.</li> <li>▪ Pavements in the High Street to be upgraded to accommodate more pedestrians and pushchairs and wheelchairs.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>26/00452/FUL Land adjacent to Fletcher Moss, Spark Hill Lane, Sparkford, Yeovil BA22 7JF –</b> Phased creation of 3 x 4 bedroom dwellings and 2 x 3 bedroom dwellings intended for Custom Build and Self Build. <b>Comments to be submitted by 06 April 2026.</b> This application has been submitted previously but was rejected due to lack of parking. The main concern that councillors have is the access out onto the A359 as visibility is limited and would recommend that access is considered via a different route. Need to remember that this has been a fatality on this part of the A359 only five years ago. Councillors agreed to <b>OBJECT</b> to this application due to the access onto the A359. <b>ACTION: Clerk to submit comments for both applications</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 5</b> <b>SPC47</b></p>	<p><b>Any Urgent Financial Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There were none.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 6</b> <b>SPC48</b></p>	<p><b>Glebe Land at Sparkford – proposal for diocese to sell land to gardens at Twine Close</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Currently houses 8, 10 and 11 rent a strip of the playing field from the parish council who in turn rent the land from the Diocese. The plan is for the Diocese to sell these pieces of land to the three houses and then the rent the parish council pays to the Diocese should be reduced. An agreement has already been drafted and the negotiations are being handled by Greenslade Taylor Hunt. The parish council are awaiting for the amendment to the document that reduces their rent and then councillors need to agree that they are in agreement to proceed. Councillors were in agreement to this progressing and for the document to be signed once it has been amended. <b>Proposed: Mr R Sealey</b> <b>Secinded: Mr L Piper</b> <b>All councillors in agreement</b> <b>ACTION: Mrs Cattermull to complete paperwork when it arrives.</b></li> <li>● Councillors wished to record that the footpath in Twines Close is also owned by the Diocese.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillors wanted a future agenda item to cover the potential approach to the Diocese to purchase the playing field.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 7 SPC49</b>	<b>Qualifications for the Playing Field to be able to carryout maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate has been presented but clerk need to double check with Somerset Council and parish council insurance that it will be enough for maintenance activities to take place. Need to ensure it provide qualification to enable safe working on the highways.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 8 SPC50</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Monday 13 April at 2000</b></li> </ul>

Meeting closed at 2145

	<b>ACTIONS</b>	
	<b>25 MARCH 2026 MEETING</b>	
SPC46	Submit comments to Somerset Council for 25/00522/OUT	<b>Clerk</b>
SPC46	Submit comments to Somerset Council for 26/00452	<b>Clerk</b>
SPC48	Documents to be completed for new lease agreement with Diocese for the playing field	<b>JC</b>