

## Sparkford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the parish council meeting held on Monday 13 April 2026 at 1930 at Sparkford Parish Hall.

Present: Mr R Sealey (Acting Chair), Paul Harcourt, Larry Piper and Andrew Quick.

Also in attendance: Councillor Henry Hobhouse, one member of the public and Kaye Elston (clerk)

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| <b>Item 1</b><br>SPC 51  | <b>Apologies for absence</b>   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs J Cattermull and Mr T Tuck. These were accepted.</li> </ul>   |                             |
| <b>Item 2</b><br>SPC 52  | <b>Public Session</b>  |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no member of the public wanting to raise any matters.</li> </ul>   |                             |
| <b>Item 3</b><br>SPC 53  | <b>Declarations of interest</b>  |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>   |                             |
| <b>Item 4</b><br>SPC 54  | <b>Minutes of last meeting 02.03.2026 and EOM 25.03.2026 and Matters Arising</b>   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors in agreement to accept both sets of minutes.<br/><i>Proposed: Councillor Quick</i><br/><i>Seconded: Councillor Harcourt</i><br/><i>All councillors present in agreement</i></li> </ul>  |                             |
| <b>Item 5</b><br>SPC 55  | <b>Report from Somerset Unitary Councillor – Henry Hobhouse</b>  |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Hobson advised that there are proposals to change the role parish councils have in the process of reviewing planning applications. Currently they have the right to refer a decision made by a planning officer to the Area Committee if they believe there is either missing or misrepresented information in the decision that has been made. National proposals would take this right away and the final decision would sit with a planning officer. There is a consultation on the proposals that parish councils and members of the public can submit responses to by 23 April 2026. It was agreed for Sparkford Parish Council to submit a response which will be drafted by the clerk and also to send the details of the consultation to the county wide group currently forming to challenge Somerset Council in their planning processes (SCRAPP).<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul> |                             |
| <b>Item 6</b><br>SPC 56  | <b>Planning applications</b>   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>   |                             |
| <b>Item 7</b><br>SPC 57  | <b>Determination of Planning.</b> Receive the following notices:   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>APP/E335/w/25/3370208 Land adjoining Mill Cottage</b> – case went to appeal and the Planning inspector has concluded the application should be refused.</li> </ul>   |                             |
| <b>Item 8</b><br>SPC 58  | <b>Other planning matters.</b>   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haynes printing building/The Old Creamery update – Councillor Harcourt advised that there has been some additional boarding put in place by the windows and front elevation. Councillor Harcourt has contacted the architect of the owner who confirmed that there is still a plan to apply for planning permission to develop the site .</li> <li>• SCRAPP membership consideration and cost – Councillor Harcourt advised that a constitution has been drafted which confirms the cost of membership will be in the sum of £150. Councillors were in agreement to join SCRAPP as they believe parish councils joining together to challenge Somerset Council planning processes has the potential to be beneficial. They also agreed to the cost of £150.<br/><i>Proposed: Councillor Harcourt</i><br/><i>Seconded: Councillor Quick</i><br/><i>All councillors present in agreement</i></li> </ul>       |                             |
| <b>Item 9</b><br>SPC 59  | <b>Finance and Payments (RFO – Clerk)</b>  |                             |
|                          | <b>Payments</b>  |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaye Elston (salary)</li> <li>• PKF Littlejohn</li> <li>• SALC annual fee</li> </ul>  | £377.59<br>£1323<br>£409.54 |
| <b>Item 10</b><br>SPC 60 | <b>Receipts:</b>   |                             |
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precept payment received – first of two</li> </ul>  | £13 375                     |

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|                           | instalments. Received<br>09.04.2026.   |  |
| <b>Item 11<br/>SPC 61</b> | <p><b>Other finance matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Account balances as at 04.03.2026<br/>Barclays Community Account - £1073.56<br/>Barclays Business Savings Account - £59 162.23</li> <li>Summary of income and expenditure – to follow once clerk has access to online banking</li> <li>Barclays Bank additional authorised signature of new clerk – this needs to be chased as clerk has not been advised of an update by Barclays. Clerk to call Barclays.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Parish Online subscription – this is a membership that can provide the parish council with information about maps in the local area and many other parish related matters. Initially there is a 90 day free trial to see if councillors would like to purchase the membership. If agreement to go ahead then the cost per annum is £50 + VAT. Councillors were agreement to access the 90 day trial and the clerk will contact Parish Online to process.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>External auditor PKF Littlejohn correspondence – due to a number of issues and a request from a member of the community to have the accounts reviewed there is now a charge to the parish council for the additional work carried out by the auditors in the sum of £1323. Councillors were in agreement that it needs to be paid and clerk advised she is awaiting the invoice.<br/><b>Proposed: Councillor Harcourt</b><br/><b>Secoded: Councillor Quick</b><br/><b>All councillors present in agreement</b></li> <li>Internal audit arrangements 2025-26 - clerk currently arranging with the auditor a time to being to review the accounts.</li> <li>SALC annual subscription in the sum of £409.54 – councillors in agreement to continue the membership and pay the fee.<br/><b>Proposed: Councillor Quick</b><br/><b>Secoded: Councillor Sealey</b></li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Item 12<br/>SPC 62</b> | <p><b>Grant requests.</b> Receive the following grant requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were none.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Item 13<br/>SPC 63</b> | <p><b>Quarterly Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cherry Pie Lane resurfacing – this is due to be resurfaced by the developer but still has not happened. Clerk to follow up with Chris Wadham from Somerset Council Highways again and copy in Councillor Hobhouse.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Goodwin Drive pavement (Ashford Homes) – there has still not been any progress on this in terms of road adoption. Clerk to contact developer to chase.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Footpath diversion – this work has been ongoing for some time and it was agreed that the clerk would email Eve Wynn who is the Footpaths officer and copy in Councillor Hobhouse.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Potholes on Sparkford Hill Lane – some have been filled in but there are still some outstanding ones. Clerk to send chasing email and copy in Henry Hobhouse.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Street Lights at High Street, Sparkford – to be replaced either by Highways for developer. Agreed to send developer an email to ask for a progress update.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Item 14<br/>SPC 64</b> | <p><b>Sparkford Parish Council – Land owned or responsible for</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daisy Wood – solicitor has been appointed and chaser has been sent for an update.</li> <li>New Parish Hall land and agreement to proceed and sign the legal documents – councillors were in agreement that this can now be signed. Two councillors need to sign.<br/><b>Proposed: Councillor Quick</b><br/><b>Secoded: Councillor Sealey</b><br/><b>All councillors present in agreement</b></li> <li>Playing Field and Diocese agreement review of new lease due to diocesan sale of land adjoining playing field to occupants in Twines Close – councillors have reviewed and agree to signing the lease once the revised lease figure has been confirmed. Parish council may need to employ a solicitor to complete this work.<br/><b>Proposed: Councillor Sealey</b><br/><b>Secoded: Councillor Harcourt</b><br/><b>All councillors present in agreement</b></li> </ul>  |  |

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|                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent requests at Twines Close – clerk has identified who they need to be sent to and prepared the letters but unsure if they pay in advance or in arrears. Clerk to check.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>New Village Hall working group – Terms of Reference have been circulated and Councillor Harcourt will merge the documents into one and then circulate.<br/><b>ACTION: Councillor Harcourt</b></li> <li>Marlow Gate at the Cricket Club – there needs to be a further discussion with the Cricket Club on what they would prefer. Councillor Sealey to contact them.<br/><b>ACTION: Councillor Sealey</b></li> <li>Agreement with Somerset Council Highways maintenance and Highways if the training covers maintenance around the parish – clerk to speak to Councillor Cattermull.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 15<br/>SPC 65</b> | <p><b>Highways.</b> Consider the following and agree any actions arising<br/>Update / Items to report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports of issues in the village – there were none.</li> <li>Police report for March has been circulated and provide general details of arson and criminal damage and theft, but it is unclear on anymore detail. Councillor Sealey is going to attend the meeting set up by the LCN to meet the Police and Crime Commissioner on 07.05.2026 where this will be raised.<br/><b>ACTION: Councillor Sealey</b></li> <li>Ditches at Church Road – unsure of more details on this item and therefore will be placed on the May agenda.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Speed Indicator Device Report and location of devices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data circulated to councillors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Speedwatch Report (CC) – update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team are out twice a week and have recorded over 1000 vehicles passing through the village. The highest speed recorded was 47mph and the average speed of those over the speed limit is 35 – 38 mph. There have been a small number of people who have abusive to the volunteers of speedwatch.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Item 16<br/>SPC 66</b> | <p><b>Parish Paths.</b> Update / items to report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dog waste bin recently installed – this is being emptied.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 17<br/>SPC 67</b> | <p><b>Play Areas.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No problems to be reported.</li> <li>There has been a recent litter pick which resulted in 16 bags of refuse.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 18<br/>SPC 68</b> | <p><b>Defib Installation update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been installed and now just waiting for the electrician to complete the task before advising it is ready for use.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Item 19<br/>SPC 69</b> | <p><b>Maintenance.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rubbish accumulating in the parking area at the garage that is owned by McDonalds. Will ask the garage if they can pick up the rubbish.</li> <li>Cutting of verges and hedges – clerk to contact Cary Traders to obtain and quote and ascertain if they can do in September.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul>  |
| <b>Item 20<br/>SPC 70</b> | <p><b>Emergency Plan (RS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been drafted by Councillor Sealey and circulated. Councillors in agreement to adopt the plan. Needs to be placed on website and then referenced in the Sparks magazine.<br/><b>ACTION: Councillor Quick</b></li> </ul>  |
| <b>Item 21<br/>SPC 71</b> | <p><b>Councillor training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SALC training newsletter circulated</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 22<br/>SPC 72</b> | <p><b>Correspondence.</b> Receive the following correspondence and agree any actions arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCN on 07.05.2026 and meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner.</li> <li>Setting up a Whatsapp group for councillors so that quick, urgent messages can be sent out – councillors in agreement and will provide their contact number to the clerk.<br/><b>ACTION: Councillors and Clerk</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 23<br/>SPC 73</b> | <p><b>Future agenda Items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports from the village organisations for the Annual Parish Meeting – clerk to request.<br/><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Item 24<br/>SPC 74</b> | <b>Date of next meeting to include Annual Parish Meeting, Annual Parish Council Meeting and Ordinary Parish Council meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="304 145 660 174">• Wednesday 07 May at 1945</li></ul> |
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Meeting closed at 2120