

## Sparkford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 06 May 2026 at 1945 at Sparkford Parish Hall.

Present: Mrs J Cattermull (Chair), Mr R Sealey, Mr Paul Harcourt, Mr L Piper, Mr D Westwood and Mr Trevor Tuck.

Also in attendance: Councillor Henry Hobhouse, Councillor Kevin Messenger, three members of the public and Kaye Elston (clerk)

<b>Item 1</b> <b>26/27/SPC14</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor A Quick. These were accepted.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 2</b> <b>26/27/SPC15</b>	<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> <b>26/27/SPC16</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 4</b> <b>26/27/SPC17</b>	<b>Minutes of last meeting 13.04.2026 and Matters Arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors in agreement to accept minutes. <i>Proposed: Councillor Westwood</i> <i>Seconded: Councillor Harcourt</i> <i>All councillors present in agreement</i></li> <li>• Matters arising – covered on the agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Item 5</b> <b>26/27/SPC18</b>	<b>Report from Somerset Unitary Councillors Hobson and Messenger</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government consultation has been in place for people to be able to respond to the proposal to remove current powers that parish and local authority councillors have to request a planning application is presented before the Area Planning Committee for further scrutiny. Going forward any housing applications for under ten houses to be developed will be decided by Planning Officers. Parish councils will still be able to comment on the application but they will lose the ability to request it goes through another level of scrutiny. Sparkford Parish Council submitted comments to the consultation.</li> <li>• Station Road at Castle Cary work – this work has commenced and the costs have increased. The work is due to be completed by 01.07.2026.</li> <li>• Monthly pothole report – Somerset Council is 16<sup>th</sup> on the list of councils for repairing potholes, so they are more effective than some other councils. People need to report potholes so that white lines can be painted around them as then they are identified and will be repaired.</li> <li>• Somerset Council budget – they are still under threat of Section 114 notice. Councillors believe that local MPs, Sarah Dyke and Adam Dance are working hard.</li> <li>• Dirty Business documentary – councillors recommend watching this documentary as it provides insight in how the water companies operate.</li> <li>• Castle Cary train station with lifts planned work – this has now been cancelled due to costs and there are now plans to put in ramps. There are also plans for a third carpark.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 6</b> <b>26/27/SPC19</b>	<b>Planning applications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 7</b> <b>26/27/SPC20</b>	<b>Determination of Planning.</b> Receive the following notices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>26/00550/TPO Woodpeckers, 9 Ainstey Drive, Sparkford, Yeovil BA22 7JT</b> – Application to carry out Tree Surgery works to No.4 Trees. T1, T2, T3 Small leaves lime (<i>tilia cordata</i>) Re pollard trees by removing the epicormic and reiteration growth back near the past 2018 reductions points this will lesson the overall canopy radial spread by approx. 4 metres. All pruning cuts won't exceed approx. 65mm in diameters and will be applied only on the new regenerated young wood, therefore the tree surgery work will trespass the young material as threshold point between parent limbs or main scaffold structure and the already established pollard heads. T4 Over mature oak (<i>quercus robur</i>) growing in the field corner, prune the lower tips of south east branch to lift canopy by half meters to improve light factor in the garden. The removal of a little branch drop crotch out with silky saw (approx. diameter of cut 25-30mm). <b>Notification only.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Item 8</b> <b>26/27/SPC21</b>	<b>Other planning matters.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haynes printing building/The Old Creamery update – Councillor Harcourt advised there are no updates at this time.</li> <li>• National Planning consultation submission – see Minute 26/27/SPC 18 above.</li> <li>• Sutton Farm HGV concerns – email has been received which advises that other parish councils n the group have decided to pursue the legal route to try and resolve this issue. Sparkford have</li> </ul>

	<p>been asked if they have any complaints from residents that they can evidence about Hopkins lorries. Councillor Harcourt advised he spoke to the Transport Manager at Hopkins last summer regarding the concerns but there have not been any formal complaints from residents in the village.</p>													
<p><b>Item 9</b> 26/27/SPC22</p>	<p><b>Finance and Payments (RFO – Clerk)</b> <b>Payments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaye Elston (salary) £377.59</li> <li>• PKF Littlejohn £2175</li> <li>• Cllr Tuck (defib signage) £27.96</li> <li>• Cllr Tuck (maintenance) £24.86</li> <li>• HMRC (PAYE) £94.20</li> <li>• Kaye Elston (expenses) £25.48</li> </ul>													
<p><b>Item 10</b> 26/27/SPC23</p>	<p><b>Receipts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None received.</li> </ul>													
<p><b>Item 11</b> 26/27/SPC24</p>	<p><b>Other finance matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Account balances as at 01.05.2026 Barclays Community Account - £4037.90 Barclays Business Savings Account - £68 000</li> <li>• Summary of income and expenditure – to follow with end of year figures.</li> <li>• Barclays Bank additional authorised signature of new clerk – this has now been processed and the clerk had to make a phone call to gain the final permission.</li> <li>• External auditor, PKF Littlejohn, correspondence and additional fees – a new invoice has been received by the clerk which provides further detail of the charges. The total invoice is in the sum of £2175 and is detailed as follows: <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td>Normal fee</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£420</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chasing letters as accounts not submitted on time</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£290</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fees for reviewing at request of resident</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1102.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>£1812.50</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>VAT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£362.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>£2175</b></td> </tr> </table> </li> <li>• Internal auditor arrangements – the internal auditor secured is no longer available and the clerk is currently trying to source another one. The challenge with this is the amount of work that will have to be carried out due to the issues with the accounts from 2023-24 when there was not an internal audit or the full submission of documents for the external auditor. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>• Parish Online subscription – the clerk has investigated this and the parish council already have signing in details as the process was commenced in the last year to have the 90 day trial period. Clerk has reactivated this and passed log in details to councillors who feedback that the maps accessed could be more up to date. At the end of the 90 day trial the parish council will receive an invoice and they can then choose if they wish to subscribe. Clerk also circulated a group that meets online that supports users and may help councillors understand what they can access.</li> <li>• Somerset Council contract to empty bin at Twines Close – a refreshed quote has been obtained to empty every two weeks instead of every week in the sum of £202. Councillors agreed to accept the quote and clerk to return the signed paperwork. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> </ul>		Normal fee	£420	Chasing letters as accounts not submitted on time	£290	Fees for reviewing at request of resident	£1102.50	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1812.50</b>	VAT	£362.50	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2175</b>
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<p><b>Item 12</b> 26/27/SPC25</p>	<p><b>Grant requests.</b> Receive the following grant requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were none.</li> </ul>													
<p><b>Item 13</b> 26/27/SPC26</p>	<p><b>Quarterly Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next update in September.</li> </ul>													
<p><b>Item 14</b> 26/27/SPC27</p>	<p><b>Sparkford Parish Council – Land owned or responsible for</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daisy Wood – solicitor has advised that the registration with the Land Registry should be complete by December 2026.</li> <li>• New Parish Hall land - councillors voted to sign the agreement at the last meeting and this has progressed so that any legal fees can be paid for the necessary legal documentation to be completed. The necessary funding has been lodged with Battens solicitors and Sparkford Parish Council await invoices to pay for the legal services. To be placed on next agenda. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>• Playing Field and Diocese agreement for new lease – the agreement was reviewed at the last meeting and the reduced rent for the field payable by the parish council once the three pieces of land for Twines Close have been legally completed will be in the sum of £233.91. This figure is what was expected. The parish council will need to provide a conveyancer to be completed this</li> </ul>													

	<p>work. Councillor Sealey agreed to speak to Stone King about this piece of legal work to establish if they could take this on.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Councillor Sealey</b></p> <p>Discussion around the rents due from the three home owners at Twines Close and clerk confirmed that the requests have gone out in the post. Councillors would prefer the conveyancing not to be completed until the rent payments are up to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Village Hall working group – Terms of Reference have been circulated and councillors were in agreement to reference the group as a Working Group and not a Committee. Mrs Cattermull to approach volunteers so that the group can set up the first meeting. Survey has been completed to ask community what they would want from the new village hall. Councillors to locate previous survey.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Councillors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cricket Club fence – it has been agreed that the fencing is two uprights short of what was agreed. The contractor agreed with Cllr Cattermull to rectify and join the fence to the hedge but has not completed the work yet. Councillor Piper advised he will speak to him.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Councillor Piper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marlow Gate at the Cricket Club – councillor Piper has spoken to the club and they are happy to put in the gate and pay for it.</li> <li>• Agreement with Somerset Council Highways maintenance and Highways if the training covers maintenance around the parish – confirmation still required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 15</b> <b>26/27/SPC28</b></p>	<p><b>Highways.</b> Consider the following and agree any actions arising</p> <p>Update / Items to report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports of issues in the village</li> </ul> <p>Goodwin Drive – councillors reported that this has now been adopted by Somerset Council Ditches at Church Road – the owner of this location does not want any machinery on his land but advised they are happy to have the ditches dug by hand but at no cost to themselves. Councillors in agreement that the preferred method would be to use machinery. Agreement to contact the housing association, Abri and ask them how best to proceed.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic Survey completed since work on A303 been upgraded – councillors confirmed the survey has been completed and the report has gone to the project team. Need to chase Ian McWilliams at Somerset Council. Also consider submitting SID data.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Clerk</b></p> <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>• Speedwatch – they have been out in April and the highest speed recorded was 48mph. Currently recruiting more members for the team.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 16</b> <b>26/27/SPC29</b></p>	<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> <li>• Village grass cutting arrangements – the listing needs to be updated and Councillor Tuck will complete this task.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Councillor Tuck</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass cutting in Daisy Wood – there was a discussion about which parts should be cut to enable groups to use the wood for activities like the scouts and which parts should be left wild as per the original agreement. Agreement to mow around the stone and picnic benches and beyond the summer house and paths to be just 1 mower wide.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Councillors Piper and Tuck</b></p>
<p><b>Item 17</b> <b>26/27/SPC30</b></p>	<p><b>Play Areas.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No problems to be reported.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 18</b> <b>26/27/SPC31</b></p>	<p><b>Defib Installation update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been installed and the monitoring package is up and running.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 19</b> <b>26/27/SPC32</b></p>	<p><b>Maintenance.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing to report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 20</b> <b>26/27/SPC33</b></p>	<p><b>Councillor Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing to report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 21</b> <b>26/27/SPC34</b></p>	<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. Late notification this afternoon that the PCC can no longer attend.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stroke Unit in Yeovil – correspondence receive asking for comments about the closure of the unit. Councillors agreed that they have no further comments.</li> <li>Letter from resident of Wolfster Terrace – this has only just been received by the chair prior to the meeting. The concern raised was that since the work completed on the A303 the residents believe this has become a ‘rat run’ and there are now increased volumes of traffic using that road. This is challenging and will required some communication with Highways as councillors feel the only way to prevent this happening is to close the northern end of the terrace. To be placed on next agenda. <b>ACTION: Clerk</b></li> <li>Facebook – need to review if the permissions to use can be amended as they are still with the previous permanent clerk.</li> </ul>
<b>Item 22</b> <b>26/27/SPC35</b>	<b>Future agenda Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None put forward at this time in additional to matters arising</li> </ul>
<b>Item 23</b> <b>26/27/SPC36</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 01 June 2026 at 2000</li> </ul>

Meeting closed at 2200