

Sparkford Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the parish council meeting held on Monday 06 July 2026 at 2000 at Sparkford Parish Hall

Present: Councillors Jane Cattermull (Chair), Trevor Tuck, Paul Harcourt, Andrew Quick and Richard Sealey

Also in attendance: Councillor Henry Hobhouse, James Andrews (Set Square Studio), ten members of the public and Kaye Elston (clerk)

Item 1 26/27/SPC67	Apologies for absence and Opening Remarks - Councillor D Westwood and Councillor L Piper. These were accepted. - Councillor Cattermull wanted to congratulate Wyverne Cooperative for receiving two awards from Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) for rooftop solar and housing solution.
Item 2 26/27/SPC68	Public Session - Set Square Studio representative, James Andrew, presented the proposed development of the old Haynes Publishing site to 9 houses with access onto the road at the front of the current plot. Plans were distributed to the councillors. Outline planning permission was granted in 2017 and Set Square Studio has tried to map the original permission given but there are some further amendments. James asked councillors and the public if there were any questions. Councillor asked if the access onto the road can be considered in the development as it is right on the corner of the road. James advised that Somerset Highways will have an input to that part of the development. Councillors would prefer that there is not any parking at the front of the site as this would reduced visibility for vehicles leaving the site. James advised that outline planning permission will be applied for soon after this meeting. - Traffic on the High Street – member of the public said the traffic on the High Street has increased significantly since the improvements on the A303 were completed. The member of the public does not believe the parish council has done anything to review this situation. Councillor Cattermull advised that a report has been requested and received from National Highways to review alongside the pre work report and this was discussed at the last parish council meeting in June. This item will be discussed in more detail further down the agenda.
Item 3 26/27/SPC69	Declarations of interest There were none.
Item 4 26/27/SPC70	Minutes of the ordinary parish council meeting on 01.06.2026 and EOM 29.06.2026 and Matters Arising - Councillors in agreement to accept minutes: Proposed: Councillor R Sealey Seconded: Councillor T Tuck All councillors present in agreement - Matters arising – not covered on the agenda Councillors Portfolios – these are now complete ready to put on the website. ACTION: Clerk, Councillors Cattermull and Quick Sparkford Parish Council Facebook page – Councillor Quick is now able to add items to the site as an administrator. Previous clerk still needs to release themselves from the main administrator as they should not now be putting messages on the site as no longer employed by the parish council. Councillor Quick to continue communication with previous clerk. ACTION: Clerk Complaint regarding Copse Trust update – Councillor Cattermull has spoken to the owners of the copses again. One of the concerns is the tree collars in the Millenium Wood which are supposed to be bio degradable but this appears to be taking longer that anticipated and therefore need to be taken away. Potentially this could be a task for an organisation in the village. The copse do not belong to the parish council and therefore they are unable to dictate what happens in the woods but they have established that the Trust for the copses does have Woodland Insurance which will include public liability for people accessing the woods. It was agreed to move Millenium Wood onto the September agenda for further discussion. ACTION: Clerk
Item 5 26/27/SPC71	Report from Somerset Unitary Councillors Hobson and Messenger Councillor Hobson advised he will talk further down the agenda for the Flood Scheme discussion.
Item 6 26/27/SPC72	Planning applications There were none
Item 7	Determination of Planning. Receive the following notices:

26/27/SPC73	There were none.	
Item 8 26/27/SP74	Other planning matters. - Haynes printing building/The Old Creamery update – See Minute SPC88 above. - Somerset Local Plan Scoping Consultation to be submitted by 24.07.2026 – details have been circulated to councillors. A positive point in the information provided has proposed that Sparkford is considered as a rural settlement instead of a small village, partly due to not having a school and also that residents in the main have to commute from the village for their work. The part that Councillor Cattermull believes should be challenged is the points awarded to facilities in the village in relation to the current allocation of 3 points for a Recreation Ground and 1 point for playpark. They are the same and therefore should not be separated. - Development of land southwest of Bridge Cottage, Sparkford – concerns raised as this has been an area that has flooded in the past when there has been heavy rainfall. The area was classified as high risk for flooding. Previously water came into Bridge Cottage one way and flowed out through the other side. It falls in Zones 2 and 3 of the Flood Zone map although the development alludes to the fact that it is outside the Flood Zone. This proposal is for 125 houses which also does not include any information on traffic, when in reality all the residents are likely to need to drive to be able to access services, work etc. Recommendation from Henry Hobson is that the parish council writes to the Planning Officer to ask if the Flooding Officer has completed their work around the historical flooding on that site. Do they know that the Environment Agency has deemed this a flooding area. ACTION: Clerk - Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) – this document provides information from Somerset Council following the ‘call for sites’ for potential development in Somerset. Sparkford has a number of sites earmarked. Haynes old site is not on the HELAA. Some of the sites were already known to the parish council as possible development sites but there are also some new ones. Councillor Harcourt will put the information onto a map for councillors to review. Councillors will need to consider this information alongside sustainability and balance of development across the village. - SCRAPP – the organisation that has been set up for parish councils to join together across Somerset to challenge Somerset Council and their planning process and decisions. The annual membership fee for SCRAPP has been set at £150. Councillors were in agreement to pay the fee. Proposed: Councillor Harcourt Seconded: Councillor Quick All councillors present in favour	
Item 9 26/27/SPC75	Finance and Payments (RFO – Clerk) Payments - Simon Pritchard (internal audit fee) - T Tuck (cutting of keys) - SCRAPP These payments were agreed by councillors. Proposed: Councillor Sealey Seconded: Councillor Harcourt	£295.00 £9.00 £150.00
Item 10 26/27/SPC76	Receipts: No payments received	
Item 11 26/27/SPC77	Other finance matters - Account balances as at 31.06.26 Barclays Community Account - £3099.72 Barclays Business Savings Account - £68 181.18 HTB (Daisy Wood) - £30 500 - Summary of income and expenditure – this has been circulated to councillors - Budget monitoring – spending up to this meeting has been added into the budget to monitor spending within budget lines. Clerk advised that there is an overspend on audits in the sum of £1925 to date due to the external auditor fees from 2024-25, and an overspend on legal fees in the sum of £2622.65 as there have been a number of legal fees to pay due to land not being registered. - Internal auditor report and actions – these were listed in the minutes of the EOM on 29.06.2026.	

	- Annual financial return to external auditor for 2025-26 – clerk confirmed these have all been submitted by 30.06.2026 and will be put onto the parish council website. - Transfer to current account to maintain a balance of £5000 in the sum of £2677 was agreed. Proposed: Councillor Sealey Seconded: Councillor Quick All councillors in agreement
Item 12 26/27/SPC78	New Parish Hall - Plan of action agreed – at the meeting on 29 June it was agreed to obtain quotes for the initial scheme of work agreed on the site of the new parish hall. Councillor Tuck believes there has been a breach in the agreement with Lovells regarding what can happen with the ground. The document has been circulated and the remaining councillors do not read the document in the same way and do not feel there has been a breach. If the bund is not removed in the first stage then it will need to be maintained and could be challenging as on a slope. It was agreed that the contractors who provide the quotes will be able to advise on this. Councillors are in agreement that currently the bund on the site is not a pleasant one for the residents of Cherry Blossom Way but the plan is to tidy it up. One of the reasons to keep the bund in place initially as it helps to keep vehicles off the site apart from those who need to be there. Councillor Harcourt has obtained one quote and will forward onto Trevor so that he can use the same specification, without disclosing the price, with another potential contractor. Ideally the quotes will be obtained before the end of July and the parish council can hold an EOM to be able to instruct one of the contractors. ACTION: Quotes to be sent to clerk who will set up a meeting. The next stage will be to consider seeking advice from an architect and the working group can discuss further when necessary. - Parish Hall Working Group update – they have met for the second time and received a presentation from West Camel who have been through a similar process. Paul Griffiths has agreed to lead the Working Group. - Parish Hall information to be submitted for Sparks magazine – Councillor Cattermull advised that the parish council can have one page free but if they want a double page it would cost £73. Councillors were disappointed with this response and would like to reposition this request as they do provide a free link on the parish council website for the parish magazine. Councillor Cattermull to feedback to the Sparks magazine. ACTION: Councillor Cattermull
Item 13 26/27/SPC79	Grant requests. Receive the following grant requests: Grant request received from Western Bampfylde Church in the sum of £200. Councillors agreed that they need to establish if there are any other organisations that require a grant. Clerk to write to organisations and place on the agenda for September 2026. The parish council has budgeted for £1500 for grants. ACTION: Clerk
Item 14 26/27/SPC80	Policy Reviews - Standing Orders – to be placed on September agenda. - Financial Regulations – to be placed on September agenda.
Item 15 26/27/SPC81	Sparkford Parish Council – Land owned or responsible for - Daisy Wood – no further update expected until the end of the year when the land registry process has completed. - Playing Field and Diocese agreement - the original document was signed and sent to solicitor in Bath who have advised they have not received. Therefore another set has now been signed and will be sent recorded post. ACTION: Clerk
Item 16 26/27/SPC82	Highways. Consider the following and agree any actions arising Update / Items to report - Reports of issues in the village – Street Scene have been out weed spraying in Queen Camel but not at the request of the parish council. It is challenging to be aware of what teams will be where and when as Somerset Council do not appear to have a schedule that have released. - Ditches at Church Road – Councillor Cattermull advised that she is hoping this can be covered in the discussion on Flood Resilience Fund. - Suggested use of enhanced maintenance pilot for road maintenance (road clearance) – no further update currently but Councillor Cattermull will follow up with Tracey Harris at Somerset Council. ACTION: Councillor Cattermull

	- Wolfester Terrace – need to send a letter to the residents to ask if they would like one end closed as a measure to manage the traffic going through. Their request would then need to be discussed with Somerset Highways which would include the use of the service bus through the terrace. ACTION: Clerk Brown signs pointed into the terrace from Sparkford Hill will be removed by Somerset Highways. - Complaint of parking in Brains Lane – a complaint has been passed to Councillor Cattermull around the number of cars parking in the lane when there are cricket teams visiting the ground. Sparkford now rent out their pitch to other clubs and this has potentially created more frequent parking of cars in the lane. There are reports of cars parking on the grass verges which make it challenging for the business at the end of the lane, Horrell and Horrell, for themselves and customers to get through. There is an agreement with Horrell and Horrell that when they have a function they do not park in the lane, but they rent carpark from the parish hall. Councillors agreed that the same proposal should be put to the cricket club as they will be earning a revenue from the visiting clubs and it would provide financial support to the parish hall. Councillor Cattermull to speak to cricket club. ACTION: Councillor Cattermull - Response from National Highways re traffic survey of the High Street, pre and post work on the A303 update – Councillor Quick has completed further analysis work on the data provided using the Speed Indicator Device (SID). He confirmed that the data prior to the work that National Highways collated was very similar to the data provided by the SID, but the data after the work completed shows significant differences between National Highways and the SID data. The SID data shows an increase of 30% in volume along the High Street although the traffic on The Avenue is less it is potentially faster. It was agreed to also collect further data from the newly formed Speedwatch team as this would provide further data. Once this additional data has been collected then further contact with National Highways to challenge their post work figures could be challenged. - Grit Bins survey received from Somerset Council – the parish council has 12 grit bins and Councillor Tuck has been around and checked them to see if any of them need to be topped up. There are two that need topping up, one outside St Mary Magdalene Church and the other at Mill Farm, Western Bampfylde. The parish council have used up all their reserves of grit and therefore will need to request a top up from Somerset Council. Clerk to send request alongside the location of the grit bins to Somerset Council. ACTION: Clerk Speed Indicator Device Report and location of devices - Data circulated to councillors. Community Speedwatch Report (CC) – update - Speedwatch – no further updates. National Speedwatch Day on 15 July 2026.
Item 17 26/27/SPC83	Flooding Somerset Council have been awarded £65 million to support flooding problems of which £15 million has been allocated to Bridgwater. On Thursday (02.07.2026) there will be a public meeting to discuss how this funding should be distributed. There will not be any decisions made until the next Somerset Council cabinet meeting in September 2026 after which there will be two years to spend the money. One of the criteria for accessing the fund is the number of houses that can be saved from flooding. In 2023 in this area 155 houses were damaged and therefore Sparkford and surrounding parishes need a plan of what they need in this area by September. In Sparkford the focus would be how to stop water building up behind the old A303 which then comes into the village. On Thursday this week Councillor Hobhouse and Councillor Cattermull are meeting with a landowner to look at potentially putting in a pond to prevent the water coming into the village and to put two pipes either side of the old bridge. Also looking at a retention pond before the sewerage farm to prevent flooding in Sparkford, Queen Camel and West Camel. Councillor Tuck also advised that there is silt that needs clearing under the railway bridge. Councillor Cattermull believes that the ditches in Church Road could also be part of the proposed scheme for flooding. Councillor Cattermull is hoping to attend the meeting on Thursday being held in Taunton. The next steps will be to put the proposal together and then obtain quotes to be submitted to Somerset Council who will decide if the scheme is possible.
Item 18 26/27/SPC84	Parish Paths. Update / items to report.

	Footpaths WN2734 and WN2735 - Councillor Hobson reported that the Footpath Officer at Somerset Council has advised that any footpath that goes across a dual carriageway is closed. Councillor Quick will report back as he believes the paths are still able to be used. ACTION: Councillor Quick
Item 19 26/27/SPC85	Play Areas. No updates
Item 20 26/27/SPC86	Maintenance. None noted.
Item 21 26/27/SPC87	Councillor Training - SALC training opportunities have been circulated. - Councillors Cattermull and Harcourt attended 'Responding to Planning applications' course and will begin to use the templates going forward.
Item 22 26/27/SPC88	Somerset Council Service to Community Awards 2026 (closing date 24.07.2026) Councillor Cattermull shared the nomination and councillors agreed. The nomination cannot be made public at this stage. Councillor Cattermull to draft the nomination. ACTION: Councillor Cattermull
Item 23 26/27/SPC89	Future agenda Items - New Parish Hall update - Flooding Mitigation fund scheme application
Item 24 26/27/SPC	Date of next meeting - Monday 07 September 2026 at 2000 - Extra Ordinary Meeting likely to be arranged at the end of July to review quotes for the new Parish Hall ground

Meeting closed at 22.23