

**MINUTES OF SPARKWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at Hemerdon Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs Peacham, Pearson-Bunt, May, Serpell Denman, Hartley, McEwing, Lee, Webb, Millford, Hutton-Fellowes, Sophie Jones (Clerk)

**In attendance:** Cllrs Baldry and Thomas (SHDC), Andrew Nisbet (TW), Hayley Holt (TW)

**Part 1 (Open to the Public)**

**001/23     Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Harvey

**002/23     Agreement of the Agenda between Parts I and II**

All agreed. Councillors noted that one item of business would be considered in Part II of the meeting.

**003/23     Declarations of Interest**

None

**004/23     County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Hart wasn't present at the meeting

**005/23     District Councillor's Report**

Cllr Thomas and Cllr Baldry attended the meeting to present their monthly update to the council. Cllr Baldry recommended a further and improved change to the waste service. He is confident it will be agreed. The service has been back in house since October last year. Since then the team have improved the service. In February for the first time in over 3 years, they achieved the national industry performance standard. Having achieved this the team are now ready to make improvements. Cllr Baldry notes that at present about half of the District is not offered a full recycling service and food waste is not collected separately for nearly 40%. Instead, it goes for incineration. Not only is this not equitable for all residents, but it costs the District. Chelson Meadow are paid to separate the materials and they get the recycling credits. The proposal is that from October 98% of households will get the full service, including weekly collection of food waste and recycling paper, card, plastics, metal and glass. Cllr Baldry would prefer to make the change earlier, but 10 additional vehicles need to be purchased, and there is a lead in time for this. The change will bring revenue costs back to budget and will noticeably improve recycling rates.

Cllr Baldry also informs the council that they are once again street cleaning. This week they are litter picking on the A38.

Lastly, Cllr Baldry says that he has been District Councillor for 16 years, and for this Parish for the past 8. Before that he was the County Councillor in the 1990's. He informs SPC that he is not standing on 4<sup>th</sup> May. Throughout his time, the Sparkwell Parish Council has been

supportive. He thanks the councillors and notes that some of the SPC councillors are also not standing. He wishes everyone well.

Cllr Peacham asks if there is an update regarding the rubbish at Langage Power Station, it has started to build up again. It is starting to look like an actual tip now. Cllr Baldry was unaware and will follow this up.

Cllr Hartley asks if the change in service for waste brings SHDC back on budget? Does the additional cost include green waste? Cllr Baldry says the £49 a year subscription fee breaks even. The capital cost is new vehicles – the outsourcing to an external contractor has cost the SHDC a lot of money.

Cllr Thomas notes that there have been some comments on social media lately regarding the state of potholes in Sparkwell. He is unable to assist with potholes, but encourages residents to report them online. Please note the reference number and pursue it with the local parish councillors who can then raise it with Cllr Hart.

Cllr Peacham thanks Cllr Baldry for all his time and effort.

Cllrs Baldry and Thomas left the meeting at 19.10

### **006/23     Public Forum**

No public present

### **007/23     Hemerdon Mine**

Hayley Holt from TW sends apologies from Neil Gawthorpe, the CEO of Hemerdon Mine, as he was intending to attend the meeting but was called away unexpectedly.

Andrew Nisbet begins the brief by discussing the funding needed for the mine, and the recent RNS announcements <https://www.londonstockexchange.com/stock/TUN/tungsten-west-plc/company-page>. The principle funding hoped for in the 1st quarter has not been realised. This will mean that any possibility of a restart of mining operations will be moved back by at least 6 months to 2024. Their CEO Neil Gawthorpe is busy raising funding to secure their short term financial needs. Andrew explained that it is taking longer than expected to secure the EA permit to operate the mine processing plant as the Environment Agency are being more risk adverse than they perhaps have been previously, focussing on Low Frequency Noise to ensure that the public do not experience the same issues as with Wolf. This delay and the cost saving measures that are needed will result in staff redundancies. TW are hoping to minimise the amount of people made redundant by upskilling them or moving them to different projects. The project is currently in the front end of rebuild/excavation but has been paused for the moment. It will continue when the funding is secured, they are anticipating this to be in around 6 months' time. It will then take a further 9 months to ramp up production.

Cllr Peacham asks if any more of semi-processed ore will be sold. Andrew says they have generated about 30 tonnes of tin concentrate and 20 tonnes of tungsten concentrate. Which they have processed and sold under a permit issued by SHDC. Other material onsite is of a lower concentrate but will be reviewed to establish if it can be processed for sale under a temporary permit from SHDC as previously granted.

Cllr Pearson-Bunt asks if it is necessary to make staff redundant, can TW furlough staff instead? Andrew said that there are no plans to furlough staff at the moment. They have considered sabbaticals or loaning staff to other companies but aren't sure if this is feasible.

Cllr Peacham asks if Mark Thompson is still place. Andrew says he has stepped away from the company and his position as Vice-Chair.

Cllr May asks for an update regarding the Schedule 5. Andrew said they are still working on their response. It is currently in two parts, with one part focussing entirely of LFN and the modelling provided to date. There are uncertainties and questions on this.

Cllr May said there are concerns with the press release and potentially cost cutting measures. He is worried what TW will be used as a processing plant. He asks for reassurance that the screens will not be used. Andrew has said that it is still the case that the screens will not be used. The process that TW have applied for is the one that came out in January, the screens aren't part of that.

Cllr Peacham has asked for clarification on where the primary crusher will be located as it is now in a higher position than previous. There must be a complete design of the crusher that the council can see. Andrew says there is a rough design/layout of the primary crusher which he will get to the SPC. He notes that the crusher is recessed and there is a ramp where the front-end loader feeds into.

Cllr Peacham notes that in the original permission that was granted, an embargo was placed on operating a primary jaw crusher at weekends and bank holidays to give respite to local residents. SPC agreed to waive this embargo for Wolf who used a rolls primary crusher (non impact). The previous CEO Max Denning gave Glen assurances that the proposed replacement Primary Jaw Crusher would only operate during daytime working hours Mon - Sat, if this is not still the case it may be necessary to reinstate the embargo to mitigate the effects of the jaw crusher on local residents. Cllr Peacham asks that an ongoing open dialogue is established regarding the potential issues surrounding this type of crusher. Andrew said he will see if he is able to share this information. There is a PS112 standard background noise assessment, all the inputs have been modelled – including the jaw crusher. Andrew will provide information to the SPC that is consistent with what TW have supplied the EA.

Cllr May asks when the next Local Liaison meeting is. Hayley says she is waiting to hear back from Sue Penaluna.

TW left the meeting at 19.36

## **008/23     Minutes**

Councillors considered the minutes of the Annual Residents meeting and Parish Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**RESOLVED** – unanimously that the minutes of the Annual Residents meeting and Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 be approved and signed.

## **008/23     Climate Change and Biodiversity**

- a. Cllr McEwing will be standing down as SPC Cllr as of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Cllr Hutton-Fellowes will be taking over these items. There is a Big Help Out being held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May (Coronation weekend). The Scouts will be helping along with villagers and residents if they are interested. They are hoping to have as many people on board as possible.

- b. See point a. above
- c. Cllr Harvey wasn't in attendance.
- d. No update
- e. SPC discussed the guidance from the River Yealm Water Quality Working Group and have agreed to highlight the advice in future planning applications.

### **009/23 P3 Scheme Footpaths**

Cllr McEwing has no updates at the moment. The next assessment is due in September so she will report back then. She still plans to coordinate the Footpath scheme once standing down from her role as councillor.

### **010/23 Neighbourhood Planning**

Nothing to report.

### **011/23 Road & Snow Warden**

No update from Cllr Harvey.

Cllr Pearson-Bunt updated the council on flooding within the area. Jago Burris, Flood and Coastal Risk Officer DCC, has updated us on a site visit he made that morning. The road down to Venton Bridge is very silted and there is evidence of scouring of the hedge banks, presumably by deer, which is adding to the problem. He has noted that the the Lengthsman had very recently cleared the drain, but as a yellow weather warning was predicted for the next 24 hours it was likely that this would quickly silt up again. He will be liaising with local landowners and the railway company to establish whether changes can be made "upstream" to slow the runoff and reduce silting, particularly where culverts may be blocked which would otherwise divert flooding into the gully under the railway rather than onto the road. He also noted that Beechwood Cross was extensively flooded and potentially unpassable. There will be a site visit in May with Cllrs Pearson-Bunt and Hutton-Fellowes. Cllr Hutton-Fellowes will continue to oversee the flooding when Cllr Pearson-Bunt stands down in May 2023.

### **012/23 Tree Warden**

Cllr May met with the tree surgeons to discuss a TPO at Dartmoor Zoo prior to the works.

### **013/23 Parish Assets (Bus Shelters, Benches, etc)**

Cllr McEwing has noticed the children's names have worn away from the bus shelter. She has records of the names and will be reapplying them as they were originally.

Cllr Hutton-Fellowes said the noticeboard will be repainted in the same colour as previous.

### **014/23 Civility and Respect Pledge**

Cllr Pearson-Bunt provided the SPC with more information regarding the pledge prior to the meeting. She encourages the councillors to agree to the pledge and suggests any new councillors attend a short 1 hour training course.

### **015/23 Planning**

- a. 0867/23/FUL; Cllrs will visit site
- b. 0380/23/HHO; No comment

### **016/23 Chairman's Business**

Cllr Peacham has been reviewing the Councillors List of Responsibilities. With reduced councillors on SPC from May, items/areas will need to be removed from the list. Planning, HR and Finance must stay on the list, the remainder will be reviewed at the May meeting.

**ACTION** – A Cllr needs to be responsible for HR

### **017/23 Correspondence**

The Clerk has emailed any previous correspondence to the Cllrs for their perusal.

Cllr May wanted to thank the Chair, Vice Chair and departing Councillors for their hard work and efforts. They will certainly be missed from Sparkwell Parish Council.

### **018/23 Finance**

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the budget analysis report and bank reconciliation for March 2023
- b. The Clerk raised the issue that as of May 2023, two of the authorised bank signatories will be standing down. Cllrs Hartley and Hutton-Fellowes agreed to become the two new bank signatories.
- c. The SPC Disciplinary Policy was reviewed and approved
- d. The SPC Grievance Policy was reviewed and approved
- e. The SPC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was reviewed and approved
- f. The SPC Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved

**ACTION** – Clerk to add Cllrs Hartley and Hutton-Fellowes as bank signatories.

### **019/23 Payments and Receipts**

- a. Cllrs reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments for March 2023.

### **020/23 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at **Sparkwell Parish Hall** on **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023** at **7.00pm**.

Meeting closed at 20.26

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed .....

Name ..... Date .....