

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
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A meeting of Mells Parish Council took place on Tuesday 7 December 2010 at Mells Barn.

1. **PRESENT:** Lady Asquith, Mr E Costelloe (Chairman), Mrs M Jennings, Mrs J Mann, Mr C Tye, Ms R Wallace (Vice Chair) and Miss H Wynter.

The Clerk was in attendance.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mr S West (for lateness), from, Mr V Turner, Lord Oxford and from Cllr Matthew Ellis.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Clare Asquith declared an interest in item 6(e).
4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on 9 October 2010 had been circulated. It was resolved that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.
5. **PRESENTATION BY JOHN MANN ON WHITE BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS**
- a) Mr John Mann produced revised pictures and plans of three alternative designs and talked through their strengths and weaknesses.

Abi Blanche-Martin arrived at this point.

- b) It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the next meeting.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a) **Police Community Support Officer's Steering Committee:** Abi Blanche-Martin reported from a recent meeting that the SpeedWatch scheme had been re-activated in Mendip.

Steve West arrived at this point.

- b) **Quarry Liaison Committee:** Steve West reported that the blasting technique at Whatley Quarry had been refined and that two foot bridges in Vallis Vale had been renewed and upgraded.
- c) **Thinning trees opposite Halecombe Quarry:** Clerk had contacted the Mells Park land agent who would investigate the problem.
- d) **Grit bins:** Both parish grit bins had been filled and almost used up during the recent cold spell. The Mells Green bin had been refilled and the Vice Chair would contact the help line to get the Upper Vobster bin refilled.
- e) **Recreation Ground:** The Chairman advised that the forms had been signed by all three directors and had been returned to the solicitors.
- f) **Signpost at Woodlands End:** Chris Tye and Helen Wynter had met with Jeff Bunting who advised that although the signpost in The Pound's garden could be moved for about £100 Highways were legally entitled to request that the owners cut back their willows as part of highway maintenance and road safety. Clerk to ask Jeff Bunting to do so.
- g) **Traffic safety at Woodlands End:** Jeff Bunting, at the same meeting with Chris Tye and Helen Wynter, agreed to repaint the road markings and clear

the gully running down to the Horner Memorial. Chris Tye had also provided a list of potholes for refilling and would indicate redundant road signs which could be removed at County Roads' expense.

- h) **Provision of snow plough for parish use:** The Clerk advised that the scheme was unlikely to go ahead in Mells.
- i) **Water supply to Mells Brook:** Clerk awaiting information before taking action.
- j) **Secure storage of council's minute books:** it was agreed that, following advice from SALC, the Clerk would take the following parish council books to the Somerset Heritage Centre at Norton Fitzwarren for safe storage:
 - Minute Books from December 1894 - July 1955
 - July 1955 – December 1973
 - January 1974 – December 1984
 - January 1985 – October 1987
 - Parish Council Receipts & Payments 1896 – 1996
 - Mells Poor Law Rate 1827These documents could be consulted at any time on application to the Heritage Centre. The Minute Book from December 1997 – December 2008 would be held by the Clerk for ease of reference.
- k) **Length restriction signs Soho Cross to Vobster Bridge:** Jeff Bunting had been informed of the anomalies and was looking into the situation.

7. PLANNING

- a) **Insertion of window within side elevation, Pipework Solutions, Lakeside Park, Mells:** Mendip DC approval.
- b) **Demolition of retaining wall, construction of a sloping driveway and a retaining wall, Meadowbank, Top Road, Mells:** Mells Parish Council had recommended refusal of permission.
- c) **Review of Mineral Planning Permissions, Application for postponement of review date, Whatley Quarry:** Mells Parish Council was content for review to be deferred, provided issues of improved lighting technology and measures to ensure outsourced lorries comply with restrictions on residential roads could be dealt with outside the review.
- d) **New wall and secure door to provide safe roosting environment for bats, Wadbury House:** with parish councillors.
- e) **Proposed timber decking, 3 Egypt Cottages, Mells:** with parish councillors

8. LETTERS FROM SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) **From Chief Executive re details of budget cuts:** noted.
- b) **Re Winter Service – collection of salt bags:** Vince Turner had collected 10 small bags of salt which would be saved for emergencies only. Email updates on gritting regime sent regularly to Clerk.
- c) **Impact of SCC budget on local youth provision:** noted.
- d) **Somerset Future Transport Plan:** noted.

9. LETTERS FROM MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL: None.

10. LETTERS AND REPORTS

- a) It was agreed to renew the Parish Council's membership subscription for the Somerset Playing Fields' Association for £10.00.

11. PROPOSED CLOSURE OF COLEFORD TIP

- a) It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Sonia Davidson-Grant (Environment Director, Somerset County Council) expressing the council's concern at the proposed closure of Coleford Recycling Centre, particularly because of the environmental impact this would have in the area.

12. FINANCIAL UPDATE: noted.

13. BUDGET

- a) It was resolved to approve the budget for the financial year commencing 1 April 2011.

14. PRECEPT

- a) In view of the current difficult financial situation it was resolved to set a precept for the financial year commencing 1 April 2011 of £9,000, similar to 2009/10 and 2010/11.

15. ACCOUNTS

- a) The Asquith Estate
(Half of FRC Applegate's account for repairs and pointing to war memorial 17/08/2010) £339.28

It was agreed to pay the above account.

16. INCOME: none.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) A new Speedwatch Co-ordinator had been appointed for the Mendip Area and as the issues which had led to the collapse of the previous scheme had been addressed David Thomson was willing to co-ordinate the scheme in Mells again. A poster asking for volunteers would go up in the Shop and an item had been drafted for the parish magazine.
- b) Mrs Rebecca Askew of Little Green voiced the concerns of her fellow residents, five of whom had at least three small children each at Mells First or the nursery school. Parents are encouraged to walk their children to school but are fearful of doing so because of the extreme traffic speeds up and down the hill between Little and Mells Green. Clare Asquith agreed to meet with concerned parents to consider the feasibility of an all weather footpath across Mells Green to the school with barriers at each end to impede vehicular access.

Clare Asquith left the meeting at this point.

- c) The Parish Council recorded their gratitude for the work of the late Miss Angela West as internal auditor for the parish accounts.
- d) At the request of the Coleford Parish Clerk, County Roads had been asked to investigate flooding between Vobster Cross and Babington, south of Lyndhurst.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 18 January 2011, 7.15 p.m. in Mells Barn.