

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
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A meeting of Mells Parish Council took place on Tuesday 6 March 2012 at Mells Barn.

1. **PRESENT:** Mr E Costelloe (Chairman), Mrs M Jennings, Mr P Lowth, Mrs J Mann, the Countess of Oxford & Asquith, Mr V Turner, Mr C Tye, Ms R Wallace (Vice Chair), Mr S West and Miss H Wynter.

The Clerk was in attendance. 2 residents were also present.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Ms A Blanche-Martin.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Clare Oxford declared an interest in Items 6(c) and 13, Jane Mann, Peter Lowth, and Chris Tye also declared an interest in Item 13.
4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on 17 January 2012 had been circulated. It was resolved that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.
5. **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING** held on 9 February 2012 had been circulated. It was resolved that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.
6. **MATTERS ARISING**
- a) **Parish Warden Steering Committee:** PCSO report for January noted. It was also noted that Ben Green had replaced Yvonne Mears as Mells PCSO.
 - b) **Signpost at Woodlands End:** Jeff Bunting of Mendip Highways had agreed to repaint all the parish signposts in due course. The Clerk had given him a list.
 - c) **Recreation Ground:** The Chairman advised that the solicitors on both sides were moving and that an agreement to pay Mells Estate £300 + VAT for the licence to assign would be on the next agenda. The Parish Council's legal costs would amount to no more than £600 + VAT plus disbursement. The Pavilion continues to deteriorate without much maintenance. It may be necessary to hold a public meeting to determine the village's intentions for the Recreation Ground.
 - d) **Mendip Community Event:** The Chairman had attended on behalf of the Parish Council. A discussion had taken place on the financial situation and budget cuts and on how parish councils related to the District and County Councils. It had been suggested that the facilities of the County Council relating to contract skills could be made available to parish councils when bidding for contracts.
 - e) **Review of old minerals permissions at Whatley Quarry:** The Chairman had discussed the question of HGVs flouting weight restrictions. Controls were available to the quarries but apprehension was dependant on the reporting of registration numbers or on photographs of offending lorries from members of the public.
 - f) **Allotment provision:** Clare Oxford had been unable to find a suitable piece of land but would continue the search.

- g) **Length restrictions signs for Vobster Bridge:** The Clerk had reminded Jeff Bunting of the proliferation of conflicting signs. The Clerk to contact him again stressing the grave concerns of the Parish Council that this issue had been dragging on for about 20 years without resolution.

7. PLANNING

- a) **Proposed agricultural building including photo-voltaic panels to roof at Stone Ash Farm, Mells:** Parish Council recommended permission.
- b) **Non material amendment to permission to change fenestration to south and west side of approved single storey rear extension at 10/11 St Edmunds Terrace, Upper Vobster:** MDC approval
- c) **Replacement of commercial outbuildings with single dwelling unit with detached garage to serve The Laurels and 2 number B1(a) office/studio units at Laurel Cottage, Little Green, Mells:** MDC approval with conditions
- d) **Extension to existing portal framed building, Mells Road Works:** MDC approval
- e) **Application for determination of conditions, the first periodic review of a mining site, Whatley Quarry, Mells:** MDC recommended that the decision be left to the Planning Officer.
- f) **Works to 15 trees within the school grounds, Mells First School, Mells Green:** with Parish Council
- g) **Installation of a timber clad temporary modular classroom with accessible and pupil toilets at Mells First School:** MDC's planning officer has concerns about the proposed development.

8. LETTERS FROM SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) **Installation of a timber clad temporary modular classroom with accessible and pupil toilets at Mells First School:** Parish Council recommended approval.
- b) **Re temporary road closure, Mells:** it was noted that footpaths on either side had been closed to enable work on the new White Bridge to take place.
- c) **From Jeff Bunting re proposed flashing warning lights for School Hill:** it was agreed that the lights were too urban for a rural location and that traffic, while parents' cars were parked along the Green, was in any case obliged to slow down. Clerk to inform Jeff Bunting.
- d) **Replacement of windows, Mells First School, Mells Green:** with Parish Council

9. LETTERS FROM MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

- a) **Empty Homes Support:** Noted.

10. LETTERS AND REPORTS

- a) **From Diana Silvester regarding village dust levels:** Lord Oxford had also raised concerns about dust levels from the muddy road outside Lime Kiln Quarry. Clerk to enquire of Somerset County Council whether it was exercising its powers to stop dust.
- b) It was agreed to pay the SALC affiliation fee of £145.56 for the year 2012/13.
- c) **From Serena Summers:** the Chairman would respond to Ms Summer's email regarding her enquiry about the maintenance of the tennis courts. He would also inform her that a community orchard had been planted in the village and refer her to the Estate to discuss wild flower planting by the duck pond.

- d) **Re Environment Agency Flood Warning Service:** this had been circulated to relevant householders in Mells. Steve West to circulate in Lower Vobster.

11. MELLS & VOBSTER COMMUNITY TRUST

- a) Under the terms of the Mells & Vobster Community Trust one trustee was to be a nominee of Mells Parish Council. It was agreed to nominate Ros Wallace as the parish council trustee for a period of five years.

12. INSURANCE

- a) **To clarify insurance position for parish councillors/clerk:** it was noted that parish councillors and clerk would be covered if a motor accident occurred while on parish council business.

13. WHITE BRIDGE

- a) Footpaths on either side had been closed on 5 March, signs installed at each end and residents informed. Temporary signs for the protective hoardings had been requested by John Mann and had been put up. The oak had been ordered and the balustrade was being fabricated. Volunteers had dug up the tarmac at one end to reveal the abutment and the other end would also be excavated. An area would have to be put down to hardcore for the crane. The Clerk had written to the Mells & Vobster Community Grant asking it to raise a cheque for its grant. A press release had been sent to *Mendip Times* and would also be sent to other media regarding the craning in of the new bridge.
- b) Projected costs: Noted.
- c) The formal opening by Lord Oxford on Saturday 2 June at 11am and arrangements for decorations and refreshments were approved with a budget of £100.
- d) It was agreed to refer designs for a plaque and/or an information board to a working party consisting of the Vice Chair, Clare Oxford, Peter Lowth and Chris Tye.
- e) It was agreed to ask Martin Moore to quote for digging and concreting in the 4 off deck pads sometime in the middle of March and for digging up the tarmac at the Bottom Lane end of the bridge.

14. DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS

- a) It was agreed to pay a grant of £100 to Age Concern Somerset.
- b) It was agreed to pay a grant of £200 to Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau, stressing that the usual amount was doubled as no grant had been requested last year.

15. ACCOUNTS

a) Somerset County Council <i>(Mells First School grant)</i>	£3,000.00
b) Somerset Playing Fields Association <i>(annual subscription)</i>	£ 10.00
c) Mann Williams Ltd <i>(Design and drawing of replacement footbridge)</i>	£1,200.00
d) JK Costelloe <i>(Clerk's salary - January February)</i>	£ 259.20 £ 259.20
	£ 518.40

It was agreed to pay the above accounts.

16. RECEIPTS None.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Clerk to remind Jeff Bunting to cut down the trees outside the entrance to Halecombe quarry.
- b) It was agreed to award Rob Symes the contract for parish footpath cutting, as specified, in 2012.
- c) Helen Wynter would remove the wreaths from the war memorial.
- d) Clare Oxford would inform the Estate that there were more loose stones on the war memorial capping.
- e) The Vice Chair asked the Clerk to remind Jeff Bunting about the repair of the bridge near Vobster Cross and of outstanding potholes at Upper Vobster.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 3 April 2012 in Mells Barn.

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