

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

**A meeting of Mells Parish Council took place on
Tuesday 8 October 2013 at Mells Barn**

1. **PRESENT:** Mr E Costelloe – Chair, Ms R Wallace – Vice Chair, Mrs M Jennings, The Countess of Oxford & Asquith, Miss H Wynter, Mrs J Seewooruttun, Mr John Earl, Mr S West, Mr C Tye
6 members of the public **In Attendance:** Joy Book, Clerk

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**
Absent: Mr V Turner, Mrs J Mann

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

4. **MINUTES OF MEETING** held on 27 August 2013 had previously been circulated. It was resolved that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

All members of the public were present to discuss the following planning application: *2013/1951 Erection of a single wind turbine to 77 metres, along with accompanying access track, crane hardstanding, substation, associated underground cabling and temporary construction – Rockhouse Farm, Chantry.*

David Sheridan, spokesperson for a committee formed to oppose the wind turbine, outlined their strategy for putting together a report for the planning department. Residents raised concerns about the effect on bats, birds, property values, tourism, the flight path and locality to Grade 1 listed buildings, Other concerns are the size and possible noise and flicker for those close to the turbine. Some fundraising has taken place to employ a lawyer with experience in fighting this type of application. The committee are in regular contact with the Planning Officer, Oliver Marigold.

The Chair pointed out that Mells and Chantry have already suffered considerably due to the quarries. It is known that EDF energy have agreed that new electricity lines across the Mendips are placed underground. This indicates that great importance is attached to the Mendips environment and there is no wish to blight it with pylons. Tourism in Mells is generally low but in the light of The Talbot being awarded Pub of the Year this may increase. Chair will try to attend any meetings arranged by the parishes and the committee.

Additional comments/concerns:-

- i) Granting permission for one turbine may set a precedent, as 10 is a more economical number for wind turbines.
- ii) The impact on humans, especially those nearby is more important than wildlife.
- iii) It is important that all the immediate Parishes (Chantry, Leigh on Mendip, Downhead and Vobster) meet to discuss the planning application as there is more power in a group.
- iv) As many individuals as possible should write to Mendip DC with their views. A leaflet drop around the villages is planned and the committee website gives pointers for any correspondence with the planning department.
- v) East Mendip is not an Area of Outstanding Beauty due to all the quarries. These are generally well obscured whereas the turbine would be very dominant on the landscape.

- vi) Mendip DC currently do not have a strategy in place for wind turbines and have only just started the process of putting a plan together.
- vii) Turbines are generally more about the commercial gain for the energy company and landowner than being about a renewable source of energy. Without government subsidies, which are paid from our taxes and by increased electricity bills, wind turbines would be uneconomic.
- viii) It is hoped to continue the campaign and to support others in a similar situation even if this application is approved.
- ix) Turbines are relatively new and concerns were raised about what would happen in future years if they are deemed uneconomic.

Parish Council vote to refuse application: 8 in favour, 1 abstention

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a) **Quarry Liaison Committee:** Steve West reported that a lot of reinstating of footpaths and bridleways has been carried out. Twelve complaints have been received in the past 6 months, 6 of which were regarding blasting and a couple regarding dust. No further meetings are planned until March 2014.
- b) **Parking by Talbot:** This should improve slightly when the garage moves. The Talbot is keen to solve the problem and it has been noted that some people are using the Recreation Ground car park.
- c) **Recreation Ground Charitable Status:** No further information. The pavilion has suffered some roof damage and funding is being sought to fix it.
- d) **Rubbish by Fussell's Ironworks:** This has been removed.
- e) **Footpath to the school:** This has been cut back and the contractor will be asked to cut it approximately 3 times a year.
- f) **Damaged sign – Top Road:** Clerk to chase.
- g) **Noticeboard:** Claire Asquith will make enquiries regarding the varnish used.

7. FOOTPATH CUTTING CONTRACT

Rob Symes has quoted £320\annum to do the footpaths including the one by the school. All present were in favour of accepting quote. Clerk to ask Rob Symes to quote for clearing the Recreation Ground car park and perimeter around the tennis courts.

8. PLANNING

- a) **2013/1951** - Erection of a single wind turbine to 77 metres. As above.

Mendip Decisions

- a) **2013/1553** Proposed front porch, St Edmunds Farmhouse, Lower Vobster – Approve with 2 conditions

9. CORRESPONDENCE FROM SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

- a) **Secretary of State for Environment – Notice of Public Enquiry Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 53:** Bridleway has recently been widened.

10. CORRESPONDENCE FROM MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

- a) **Parishes Information Bulletin** – for Vince Turner

11. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

- a) **Mendip Community Transport** – request for donation: All voted in favour of giving a £100 donation.
- b) **SALC** – Changes to Part 2 Standing Orders: For discussion at the November meeting.
- c) **Great Elm Parish Council** – Application for reduction of speed limits in village: Clerk to reply. Councillors sympathetic but a lack of policing would probably result in very little change to speeding through the village.
- d) **Resident update on MDC Council Tax Support Grant Allocation 2013/14:** MDC will be issuing all Parish Councils clear information in November about the council tax base.

- e) **Coleford Hub proposal from Mendip DC:** Chair had recently attended a meeting and would circulate the outcomes when they are available.

12. FINANCIAL UPDATE – JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Grant Thornton, external auditors, have completed the audit and found one discrepancy in the annotation of a tick box regarding the Parish Council's responsibility towards any trusts funds. Clerk to ensure this is correct in future. Councillors and Clerk were content that the finances were in order. Clerk to draw up draft budget for the next meeting.

13. ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

a.	J Book	Clerk's salary (September)	£218.67
	Expenses (September)		
		1 trip to Mells (@ 45p/mile)	£ 3.60
		Phone line rental	£ 5.50
		Utilities	£ 4.00
			£13.10
b)	HMRC PAYE Period 7		£54.60
c)	Rob Symes – Footpath cutting (2013)		£250.00
d)	Grant Thornton – External Audit		£240.00
e)	Viscount Asquith's 1998 Settlement Trust		£147.50
	<i>Proposed Ros Wallace Seconded Monica Jennings</i>		

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) **British Legion Wreath:** The Chair will make the necessary arrangements.
- b) **Somerset CC Chairman's Award:** Ros Wallace was delighted to inform the Council that John Earl's contribution to the village has been recognised by Somerset CC.
- c) **Gully bottom of Lime Kiln Hill:** This has silted up again. Clerk to ask Rob Symes to quote to clear it.
- d) **Bridge – Tynts Hill:** The drainage holes in the bridge have become blocked creating an accumulation of rainwater in that area. Clerk to contact Somerset CC.
- e) **Apologies:** John Earl offered his apologies for the next couple of meetings due to health reasons.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 12 November 2013 at 7.15pm in Mells Barn

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Print Name.....

MINUTES\2013\8OCTOBER2013