

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Minutes of the remote meeting held via Zoom of Mells Parish Council on
Tuesday 9 March 2021**

01.03.21 PRESENT:

Cllr J Earl – Chair, Cllr E Costelloe, Cllr Seewooruttun, Cllr D Seviour, Cllr H Leakey, The Countess of Oxford & Asquith, Cllr John Henderson

In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Alison Barkshire – District Councillor

Members of the public: None

02.03.21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr V Turner, Cllr S West

03.03.21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

04.03.21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

05.03.21 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2021

Previously circulated. The minutes were then approved and signed by the Chair.

06.03.21 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

i. May elections:

These have been cancelled for the County Council due to the impending Unitary Authority. The Police and Crime Commissioner and any bi-elections that are due will still go ahead.

ii. Somerset Unitary Council:

Cllr Barkshire had forwarded a link to the consultation on the Unitary Authority. The views of parish councils are welcomed before 19 April.

iii. Mendip Strategy for walking and cycling:

MDC are looking at multi-users routes. The most relevant to Mells is the completion of the Sustrans Route 21 into Frome which is still quite a long way from being achieved. Detailed plans have been drawn up.

iv. Universal basic income:

MDC has passed a resolution to request being an area to pilot universal income instead of the current universal credit system.

07.03.21 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

None submitted

08.03.21 MATTERS ARISING

i. Superfast Broadband:

Voneous are moving ahead with their installation. The downside of signing up with Voneous is that you can only sign up with Voneous for the first couple of years before you will be able to change to your chosen provider. A leaflet drop has been done in the village and they are happy to extend their service to outlying farms.

Vobster and Newbury have joined together to get the vouchers. Openreach had costed the scheme at £26,000. A total of £71,000 in vouchers have been gathered between the two villages which have been forwarded to Openreach who are trying to get the scheme approved.

ii. Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane: The Estate do not have any cobbles so other sources/options will need to be looked at. It is unknown who carried out the work on the cobbled area around the bus shelter.

- iii. **Website:** This is taking shape and the Clerk asked for comments on the logo and overall appearance to enable the designer to move forwards.
- iv. **Telephone box – painting:** Cllr Asquith will ask if anyone is interested in this work.
- v. **New Community Trust:** After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Henderson would look at putting together the basic structure of the Trust to put it to the quarry for an agreement in principle before taking it further.
- vi. **Footway by quarry:** Cllr Seewooruttun is trying to arrange a site meeting.
- vii. **Improvements to Vobster Cross bus shelter:** Clerk has approached Highways to establish whether they do own the land in front of the shelter and what works they would be prepared to do to improve the area in front of it. No response to date.
- viii. **Footpath narrowing by Lavender Cottage:** It was established that the footpath with the barbed wire is the designated footpath. Legally a footpath should be 1.5m. The path was very narrow during the growing season last year. Cllr Asquith will approach the owner and also meet Cllr Barkshire to walk a couple of footpaths in the area to ensure that they are correctly designated.

09.03.21 BARN LEASE AND FUTURE:

Lease is due up in just over two years. The Barn is being used less and less as a 'village' hall by local groups and more for parties and weddings. This may present a problem with the Charity Commission as the Barn cannot retain its Charity status if run as a commercial enterprise. There are concerns that the Barn no longer has a use as a village hall. If the PC do not renew the lease it will revert back to the Church Commission and the land behind it is Estate land which also presents an issue. The Barn does not suffer from a lack of funding but does have a lack of volunteers.

Cllr Earl suggested that local non profit making organisations should be offered the use of the Barn for free to encourage more groups to start up and use the facility. This would be funded by the parties and weddings.

It was agreed that it would be worth trying but it was likely that the only slots available would be for daytime groups as the Barn is currently used most evenings and weekends. More volunteers are required to help run the Barn and this will be looked at when the Barn re-opens.

10.03.21 HIGHWAY ISSUES:

- i. **Flooding by Vobster Quays:** Clerk has established who the owner of the field is and has passed the information back to Highways. Clerk will chase Highways for action as they have a legal obligation to keep the road clear.

11.03.21 PLANNING

- i. **New Applications:**

2020/2627/FUL: Erection of 2 dwelling and detached garage, formation of new access and associated development – Land adj Acrewood, Holes Lane. Cllrs Earl and Seewooruttun will do a site visit. Similar applications at this location have been refused in the past, mostly due to the visibility splay and its location outside the village development limits of the village. The plans on the website are too small and undetailed to accurately assess.

2021/0537/TCA: Birch – crown reduce down to the height of adjacent birch trees and remove wisteria from tree – 1-2 Hollycroft, Fairview: For tree officer

- ii. **Planning decisions:**

None.

- iii. **Other planning matters:**
APP/Q33305/Y/20/3263811 & APP/Q3305/W/20/3263809: Refurbishment and extension of cottage, including the replacement of failed rotted roof with new roof structure covered in tiles, and the removal and replacement of failed/rotted internal walls and first floor structure (removal works being retrospective) – The Cottage, Little Green: Appeal against council’s refusal of planning permission at above site.

12.03.21 CORRESPONDENCE:
Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau: Thank you for donation.

13.03.21 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

i. **Payment of Accounts:**

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Clerk’s Salary (January) | | £253.25 |
| Phone line rental | 5.50 | |
| Utilities | <u>4.00</u> | |
| | £9.50 | |
| HMRC PAYE (Period 12) | | £63.40 |

ii. **Receipts:** None

iii. **Barclays mandate:** Awaiting the re-opening of the local branch.

iv. **Provisional year end accounts:** The PC started the year with £16,911.48 and the provisional year end total is £16,967.62.

14.03.21 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **Councillor co-option:** As time is running on it was agreed that Jeremy Poynton would be invited to be co-opted back onto the council to increase councillor numbers. The other applicant will be approached to join once face to face meetings can resume. This is currently being given as May but the government guidelines for households meeting at that stage do not appear to allow for so many different ‘bubbles’ to meet indoors.
- ii. **Old Telephone Exchange:** Clerk will approach Enforcement to raise the issue of renewed activity at the site overnight.
- iii. **Damaged walls:** The Estate is currently repairing a couple of walls near Woodlands End. Part of the Barn wall also requires a repair which is the Estate’s responsibility.

15.01.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 9th March 2021 at 7.30pm which will be held remotely via Zoom at 7.30pm. Details of how to join the meeting will be available on the next agenda.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____