

## MELLS PARISH COUNCIL

(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

### Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 11 January 2022

**01.01.22 PRESENT:**

Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Alan Brady (left 8.00pm), Cllr Steve West, Cllr Jeremy Poynton, Cllr Helen Leakey, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr John Earl, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr John Henderson

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

**Members of the public:** Karen Punter - Prospective Co-optee

**02.01.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None

**Absent:** Cllr Vince Turner

**03.01.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr Asquith had an interest in planning application 2021/2730/LBC and took no part in the discussion.

**04.01.22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**05.01.22 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2021**

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

**06.01.22 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR**

Karen Punter was welcomed to the Parish Council.

**07.01.22 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:**

**i. Update from Mendip DC:**

The government has notified MDC of its funding (reduction of £243,000) for 22/23 which is again is a one year settlement making forward planning more difficult. The level of services provided is reducing year on year as a result. In addition, MDC continues to implement the grant allocations to businesses etc as requested by Government in relation to Covid support, but has not been fully reimbursed for the sums involved, placing further financial pressure on the Council.

**ii Unitary authority:**

Although all Somerset DC's were asked to provide staff to assist with the Covid booster vaccine programme, there has been no allowance made for the Unitary workload and timetable which continues to be April 2023 for the switch. An alternative IT system will be needed for the new Authority which appears to be an unthought of additional cost. In addition, MDC will need to extract itself from its existing IT contracts which will incur more costs.

**08.01.22 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** None

**09.01.22 MATTERS ARISING**

**i. Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane:**

Clerk to contact Cllr Philip Ham for Highways update. Once the bounds of what can be done are established, parishioners will be consulted on their ideas/preferences.

- ii. **Footway by quarry:**  
The quarry would like to add this to the overall planning submission which is likely to be a slow process. Cllr West will approach the quarry to try to move this forward as a separate matter.
  - iii. **Improvements to Vobster Cross bus shelter and litter bin:**  
Quote received to reduce levels, install tantalized boards for edging, install 3 x ACO drains to prevent water entering shelter, lay sub base and compact, lay 10mm close graded wearing course on approximately 12 sq metres - £860. Although the shelter is only used intermittently it was agreed that this would improve the area and hopefully encourage more people to use public transport to the Quay. The bin by the shelter is currently full of wrapping paper. Clerk to report to MDC.
  - iv. **Stiles/gates – Vobster:**  
No response from Somerset Footpaths. Clerk to chase.
  - v. **Telephone box:**  
Quotes of £800 and £750 have been received. Refurbishment to be delayed until the better weather. It appears that more books are being deposited than being removed/swapped.
  - vi. **Defibrillators:**  
These are now with the contractor for fixing. A video explaining how to use them is available on the PC website. Once installed, they will be added to the national register and checked by Cllr Seewooruttun and Cllr Seviour quarterly.
  - vii. **Vobster churchyard:**  
Awaiting response from the church PCC. It was agreed to give the £1,000 to the PCC to help their funds and it will be decided at the next meeting whether to continue with withholding the remaining grant to enable the PC to take over the ongoing maintenance of Vobster churchyard.
  - vii. **Quarry noise:**  
The noise is significantly worse, both day and night, in some areas of Mells. It has been noted that Manor fields is noisy in the day time which was not noticeable previously. The quarry is implementing many measures over the next 6 months to try to lessen the impact of noise eg. rubber lining dumpers, changing fans, restricting hours. Independent monitoring is also being carried out. The quarry will bring out monitoring equipment to an area or residence if requested.
  - ix. **White Bridge notice:**  
Cllr Leakey has cleaned the sign.
  - x. **Area in front of Vobster Inn – noticeboards and planters:**  
Highways need to approve the location of the planters and issue a licence before they can be placed on their land. Cllr Seviour to provide the information requested by them.
- 10.01.22 HIGHWAY ISSUES:**
- i. **Large lorries using Vobster Cross to Whatley quarry turning:**  
Email from Whatley resident saying they are shocked at the amount of lorries using this road and how dangerous it is for other road users. Cllr Henderson reported that in the near future, the quarry plan to monitor the vehicles to and from their site and will be asking residents to report lorries misusing the roads. Only lorries carrying materials to CPM should be using that route and the quarry are looking at tightening up on this. Cllr West wondered if it would be possible to number the lorries for ease of recognition as it is very difficult to remember a number plate. Clerk to email quarry.
  - ii. **Cutting back of hedge – Upper Vobster:**  
The hedge appears to have been cut back.
  - iii. **Proposed diversion of Footpath: FR10/63:**  
No objections to the proposed new route.

#### 11.01.22 PLANNING

i. **New Applications:**

**2021/2730/LBC:** Erection of rear extension – Tynts Hill House, Rashwood Lane: No objections.

ii. **Planning decisions:** None

iii. **Other matters:**

**3275971/3275972 Bartlett’s Quarry:** These appeals have been withdrawn and no further action will be taken.

#### 12.01.22 CORRESPONDENCE:

i. **Freightliner Merehead Environmental Consultation and communication with key stakeholders:**

Freightliner took over the freight haulage via locomotive contract in late 2019 and are currently running services from Merehead and Whatley. They are looking at ways to reduce their impact on the local environment and are keen to engage with local communities and businesses. PC were supportive of them arranging a community meeting. Clerk to respond.

ii. **Hanson – Westdown proposals to protect Asham Wood:**

Letter from quarry in response to the protests at the beginning of January giving details of what they are trying to do to improve and enhance biodiversity in the area. The void mentioned in their letter has now become an area of biodiversity in its own right and using this area will reduce wildlife/plants. A video of their proposals is available on their community website

<https://www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/whatley-and-westdown-quarry-community-page>

#### 13.01.22 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: HSBC 27 December 2021 - £14,867.24

Barclays 20 December 2021 - £5,318.15

i. **Payment of Accounts:**

Clerk’s Salary & expenses (November/December)	2 x £266.35
HMRC PAYE (Period 9 & 10)	2 x £63.40
TSO Hosting – website annual hosting fee	£86.26

ii. **Receipts:** £1,000 from the Mells Park Trust for the Annual Community Grant and 13p interest Barclays account.

iii. **Setting of Precept of 2022/2023:**

The predicted Barn lease costs have been removed from budget as the Barn is in a financial position to support this. The £1,000 grant from Mells Park Estate and a possible additional £500 from the PC will be set aside for a village celebration for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee should such an event take place. Vobster residents are in the process of arranging a Jubilee celebration and would be appreciative of some financial support if available. After discussion, the Chair proposed that the precept should rise by £1,500 to £13,000, due to the expenditure towards the latter end of 2021, the static nature of the precept for the last couple of years and the ongoing costs for the defibrillators. All were in acceptance of this increase. *Post meeting note: Last year the precept cost per household was £42.26. This will be increasing to £49.26 (£7 extra) for 2022-23.*

#### 14.01.22 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. **Platinum Jubilee tree planting (Green Canopy):**

Three areas were proposed. Cllr Asquith to look into their suitability. The Estate would offer the land, trees/hedgerows and maintain them.

**ii. Refurbishment of taps in Vobster:**

Cllr West asked if consideration could be given to improving the two taps in Vobster. He reported that he had approached the Water Board and they had said this could be done but the taps actually belonged to the PC and if they were upgraded a water meter would need to be attached to them and the PC would be charged for their usage. The taps are not on the asset list so further investigation into this needs to be carried out. It was agreed that the taps would be left untouched for now.

**15.11.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 8 February at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_