

## MELLS PARISH COUNCIL

(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

### Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 8 February 2022

**01.02.22 PRESENT:**

Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Steve West, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr John Earl, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr John Henderson, Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr Vince Turner, Cllr Karen Punter

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

**Members of the public:** None

**02.02.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None

**Absent:** Cllr Helen Leakey

**03.02.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr Asquith declared an interest in planning application 2022/0188/TCA.

**04.02.22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**05.02.22 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2022**

Previously circulated. Cllr Asquith was added to the list of those in attendance. The minutes were then approved and signed by the Chair.

**06.02.22 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Jeremy Poynton had tendered his resignation which was accepted. Clerk will notify Mendip DC that a casual vacancy has arisen.

**07.02.22 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:**

**i. Update from Mendip DC:**

The council has increased its Hardship Fund for families struggling with their council tax bill to £60k. The original fund was only £10k.

**ii. Unitary authority:**

This is a massive task because all the councils work in different ways and it is proving difficult to find a common ground to move forward with the various systems to make them safe and legal. The quoted figures for the savings of the merger appear to be over optimistic.

**iii. Local Community Network:**

This new group is run through Frome Town Council and is trying to connect rural communities. Their first focus being on children, young people and their families. Meetings are being carried out every few weeks and everyone is welcome to attend. Cllr Barkshire encouraged the PC to engage with the group.

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

**09.02.22 MATTERS ARISING**

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

No further information.

**ii. Footway by quarry:**

No further information. The road is getting into disrepair again. The legal situation between the quarry and Somerset Highways is still unresolved.

- iii. **Improvements to Vobster Cross bus shelter:**  
Clerk to give the go ahead to the contractor. Cllr Leakey had forwarded an email asking for consideration to be given to improving the access to the Mells bus shelters which have no hard standing and puddles form in front of them. Cllr Seewooruttun will give the Clerk the locations of the drains that are block in the area so they can be reported to Highways. Cllr Seewooruttun has also been forwarding photos and information regarding bus related issues to the Somerset Bus Partnership who are trying to put in a bid for £163 million from the £3 billion government pot to improve services.
  - iv. **Stiles/gates – Vobster:**  
Somerset Footpaths have agreed to install a metal self closing gate and a new wooden signpost.
  - v. **Telephone box:**  
Work to be carried out in the better weather.
  - vi. **Defibrillators:**  
These are now installed and registered with the South West Ambulance Service. A video on how to use them will be permanently left on the front page of the parish council website. Clerk will put locations etc into the magazine.
  - vii. **Vobster churchyard:**  
After discussion, it was agreed to give an additional £500 on top of the normal grant of £2k to Mells with Vobster PCC on the proviso that they ensure Vobster churchyard is cut at least 4 times a year, during the growing season.
  - viii. **Quarry noise:**  
This was reported as not being as troublesome for those present at the meeting but some residents are still bothered by it. Independent noise surveys are being carried out to see if there is any noticeable difference in the noise at present and after they have undertaken the planned noise reduction measures.
  - ix. **Area in front of Vobster Inn – noticeboards and planters:**  
Cllr Seviour has taken photos of the area and spoken to the owners of the inn about his proposals.
  - xi. **Platinum Jubilee tree planting:**  
Cllr Asquith reported that the corner of Longfield will be planted with 3 x apple and 3 x cherry trees and the Boys and Girls crossing will also be planted. The Paddock behind Longfield has been ruled out as it is being used for grazing.
- 10.02.22 HIGHWAY ISSUES:**
- i. **Large lorries using Vobster Cross to Whatley quarry turning:**  
No response from the quarry or Highways.
- 11.02.22 PLANNING**
- i. **New Applications:**  
**2022/0174/HSE: Erection of a single storey side extension, first floor rear extension – 1 Egypt Cottages, Top Lane:** Cllrs Earl and Seewooruttun to undertake a site visit.  
**2022/0188/TCA: Manor House, Selwood Street – 4 x lime trees, pollard and reduce by 15-20m:** This is to prevent them falling into the road. For the planning officer.
  - ii. **Planning decisions:** None
  - iii. **Other matters:** None
- 12.02.22 CORRESPONDENCE:** None

### 13.02.22 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: HSBC January 2021 - £12,948.48  
Barclays January 2021 - £5,318.15

#### i. Payment of Accounts:

Clerk's Salary & expenses (January)	£266.35
HMRC PAYE (Period 11)	£63.40
J W Witt – emptying of bins at Rec Ground	
June 20 to Mar 21	£579.60
April 21 to Jan 22	£658.20
Martin Moore – fitting and electrical connection	
X 2 defibrillators	£490.00

ii. **Receipts:** Barclays interest

#### iii. Arranging direct debit payment for J W Witt:

The Clerk, Cllrs Earl and Asquith signed the mandate for future bin emptying invoices to be paid by direct debit.

#### iv. Bank charges:

Clerk reported that HSBC have now started to charge an £8/month 'Fee for maintaining the account' and £1/item 'Total of activity charge' for every cheque that is put through the account. If the PC banks electronically there would be no activity charge but the account maintenance fee would remain. Clerk to look into changing bank. The new signatory mandate was also completed by the Clerk, Cllrs Asquith, Earl and Seviour as it has come to light that the mandate submitted in 2019 has never been activated.

v. **Receipts:** None

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

#### i. Barn lease:

Negotiations have moved forward The PCC have proposed a rent of £500 pa and a 20 year lease, the barn committee are looking for a longer term but negotiations are expected to be completed soon. The matter will then be passed to the Diocese for their approval before being passed to their solicitors. The barn solicitors will comment/approve the final lease offer and the barn committee will offer comment to the PC before councillors vote on the proposed lease.

#### ii. Trust money:

Approximately £2,000/annum from the Trust is available and ideas/projects are welcomed.

#### iii. Platinum Jubilee celebrations:

The PC have agreed to use this year's grant from the Mells Park solar array (£1,000) which is given to benefit the parish and an additional £500 donation towards celebrations in Mells and Vobster. Both villages will supply a proposal for their events and the PC will pay invoices up to the above amount. The Barn has been offered free of charge. There is no wet weather plan as it would be too expensive to provide a marquee/shelter for everyone.

**15.02.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 8 March at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

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

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

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