

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on
Tuesday 9 August 2022**

01.08.22 PRESENT:

Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr John Henderson, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr Vince Turner, Cllr Karen Punter, Cllr David Seviour

In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk,

Members of the public: None

02.08.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr Alison Barkshire – District Councillor

Absent: None

03.08.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

04.08.22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: 4

- i. Present to discuss the Upper Vobster Farm application and request the support of the PC in objecting to the retrospective application. Concerns were raised that Mendip DC were removing some objections due to naming Universal Medicine and why this was being allowed. Other concerns raised were the erosion of the identity and character of the area due to overdevelopment and traffic/parking.

05.08.22 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

- i. **Unitary authority: Unitary Update:** The new Somerset County Chief Executive has been appointed (Duncan Sharkey - currently CEO at Windsor and Maidenhead). Work is underway to find ways to address the anticipated £44million budget shortfall focusing on property rationalisation and external supplier contracts. There will be consultation in the autumn on the size and scope of the proposed Local Area Networks <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/first-meetingof-lgr-implementation-board-backs-plan-to-empower-communities/> A Customer Panel is being established as part of the Somerset Council Local Government Reorganisation programme to ensure residents are at the heart of services. Panel members will have the chance to share their views by taking part in online surveys, one-to-one interviews, usability tests and discussion groups. If you are interested in being part of it, more information available : <https://playbook.somerset.gov.uk/our-customer-panel>
- ii. **Free agricultural webinars for climate-conscious landowners:** Mendip District Council is working in partnership to support Somerset landowners to tackle climate change. The *Farm Carbon Toolkit* will deliver a series of free agricultural webinars throughout the summer on how to measure, understand and act on greenhouse gas emissions. If you're interested in attending, please email climate@mendip.gov.uk.

06.08.22 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: None

07.08.22 APPROVAL OF THE MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 12 JULY 2022

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

08.08.22 MATTERS ARISING

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** Clerk has submitted the new plan to Road Transport for their approval.

- ii. **Telephone box:**
Painting is scheduled for next month. Clerk to apply for funding for the defibrillator now just in case the prices go up.
- iii. **Quarry noise:**
Noise has not been so noticeable recently which maybe due to the better weather raising the cloud base.
- iv. **Rectory bus shelter:**
No further information.
- v. **White Bridge – overhanging tree and railings:**
Two people have been asked to quote for the railings. It has been noted that another horizontal bar may encourage children to climb the bridge creating a further safety issue so some sort of vertical bars may be required. The tree has been cut back. Clerk to thank Chris Tye.

09.08.22 **BARN LEASE**

PCC are keen to renew the lease although there is a slight issue over the proposed length of the lease. The Barn committee would like 50-60 years to avoid the expense of renewing the lease more frequently (legal fees could be £7/8k) but the PCC want 36 years. The Charity Commission may say it cannot be any longer. However, a precedent has been set by the previous lease. If the instructed solicitor is happy with a 50/60 year lease, the PCC would pass this onto the Diocese.

10.08.22 **HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:**

- i. **Footway by quarry:**
Cllr West had a successful meeting with the Manager and Contractor at the quarry. They will look at cutting back the verge, levelling and installing a low fence along the road with a grassed footway. This would considerably improve the safety of pedestrians.
- ii. **Faded road markings:**
The lines on the junction of Lime Kiln Hill and Great Elm have already been re-instated.

11.08.22 **PLANNING**

- i. **New Applications:**
 - 2022/2022/1469/TCA:** Large sycamore on front border/bank – pollard canopy back to original points, removing approximately 7 metres from tree – Rosendale, Top Lane
 - 2022/1470/TCA:** Group of 3 ash stems – fell – Prospect Cottage, Top Lane
 - 2022/1471/TCA:** Alder along riverside, reduce in height by 50% (10 metres max) to stabilise and prevent failure – Land at 372852 148931 Top Lane

PC were content for the Tree Officer to decide on all the above applications.
- ii. **Planning decisions:** None
- iii. **Other planning matters – Upper Vobster Farm**
 - 2022/0979/FUL:** Change of use of existing barns into three holiday let units (retrospective) – Upper Vobster Farm. PC will write letter of objection based on overdevelopment, change of character, lack of parking and suitable housing for local people and highways issues.
- iv. **Quarry applications:** No further information.

12.08.22 **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- ii. **Litter pick:**
Transform Communications, who have offices in Woodlands End would like to contribute to the community and had noticed on their walks around the village that the river along the valley past the small waterfall needs some rubbish clearance. They have offered to give some of their company time to clear the debris (potentially on 21 September 2022) when all the team are in the office.

The PC are very supportive of this event and are happy to help if they can. However, they are uncertain who owns the land where the 'pick' is proposed.

13.08.22 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: HSBC 28 July 2022 - £19,029.39
Barclays June 2022 - £5,318.68

i. Payment of Accounts:

Clerk's Salary & expenses (July)	£271.11
HMRC PAYE (Period 5)	£64.40
J W Witt (110970) emptying of bins at Rec Ground (DD)	£90.80
Mendip DC election costs	£100.00

ii. Receipts: £0.40 Barclays Bank interest

iii. New bank account: The account the PC has with Barclays is purely a savings account and cannot be used for every day banking. Barclays do have a Clubs/Communities account which is currently free of charges, but there is currently a waiting list of up to 3 months for a telephone call followed by face to face interview. Clerk to re-visit Lloyds to see if they can action it quicker.

14.08.22 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. Vobster speed limit:

Clerk to approach Highways again to ask them to re-valuate the speed limit through the village. It has been many years since the limit was deemed safe at 60mph. In the interim period there has been a significant increase in housing developments in the surrounding villages of Coleford and Leigh on Mendip and this has led to an increase in commuting and social vehicles driving through the village. There are several driveways that open onto the road and the speed of the traffic makes it hard to egress from them. Clerk to ask for hidden driveway signs.

16.08.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 13 September 2022 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____