

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

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

01.11.22 PRESENT:

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

In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Alison Barkshire – District Councillor, Cllr Barry Clarke - Mendip Central and East Somerset Councillor

Members of the public: One

02.11.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Clare Asquith **Absent:** None

03.11.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

04.11.22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- i. **Quarry noise:** Will Palmer, member of Whatley Parish Council, reported that the Whatley Quarry Review of Minerals Planning Permissions (ROMP) was carried out in 1995 and is currently believed to be 12 years out of date.

Whatley PC would like to see evidence of base level noise and a review of the fixed monitoring points as the size of the quarry and areas that the quarry is working in has changed significantly over the years.

Whatley PC feel now is the ideal opportunity to request some changes to levels whilst a review maybe in process by sending out a questionnaire to all residents in Whatley and Chantry to assess what the impact of the quarry has on residents. They would also like to receive comments from the surrounding parishes and asked if Mells PC would like to support this action and help by sending out the questionnaire to Mells residents as well. This was agreed in principle subject to some amendments that were raised regarding the nature of the questionnaire.

05.11.22 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

- i. **Bike racks:**

Mells is through to the next round.

06.11.22 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (delivered by Cllr Barry Clarke) - Items affecting the parish:-

- i. **Somerset Bus Partnership:**

It is likely more bus services will be withdrawn as the funding received was centred on services in Taunton and Bridgwater.

- ii. **Unitary authority:**

Despite the full budget being £532 there is likely to be a shortfall of £34 million for this year and £74 million next year with significant shortfalls continuing for several years. They are looking to make savings of £27 million this coming year however Social and Child care services will be untouched so this money will be taken from other areas. If deficit was placed onto council tax it would be an increase of 13% which is well above the cap. The administration is behind with sorting savings and business plans and these will now not be in place by April when the unitary authority comes into being.

- iii. **Local Community Networks:**
It is unlikely these will be in place by April as planned as money is not available to progress this as planned. Planning and licensing are most likely to be affected by this delay.
- 07.11.22 APPROVAL OF THE MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2022**
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 08.10.22 MATTERS ARISING**
- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:**
Clerk has arranged for a more detailed plan to be drawn up and will put together an application to Mendip DC to establish whether change of use/certificate of lawfulness is required.
- ii. **Telephone box and defibrillator:**
The defibrillator should be in place in the next week.
- iii. **Quarry noise:**
Steve West reported that he had been on a fact finding mission over the last week spending several evenings at varying times visiting different areas around the parish to establish what noises were being heard. A horn was heard hooting at 11.00pm which was deemed unacceptable. Most of the noise seemed to be due to revving of the lorries as they try to get near machinery to dump their loads.

Resident reported that there is a distinct difference of noise Monday to Friday at night to that on the weekend.

Clerk reported that there had been 20 complaints from 3 people in the last month. Two thirds of the complaints were from one person.
- iv. **Rectory bus shelter:**
No further information.
- v. **White Bridge – railings:**
Chair to find out contractor's contact details.
- vi. **Barn lease:**
The Barn Management Committee and PCC have reached an agreement in principle of the Lease Headers. An interim bill of £2,350.80 has been received from Thrings Solicitors, acting for the parish council. Which the PC will pay but will be reimbursed by the Barn Management Committee. PCC will now advise their solicitors to draw up the new lease. Many thanks were extended to John Macdonald and Edmund Costelloe who have been invaluable in their help negotiating the lease.
- vii. **Abandoned cars in rec car park and Selwood Street:**
The abandoned car in Selwood Street has gone but there is still one car in the recreation ground car park. Clerk to contact Mendip DC.
- viii. **Trees in river by Vobster bridge:**
The owner of Mells Park will investigate.
- ix. **5Alive:**
Thanks were extended to Hansons who have agreed to fund the next two issues of the magazine. The long term future of the magazine is still in doubt although the PC's in the area all wish to help in some way. Clerk to invite the editor to the next meeting to explain costs etc.
- x. **Trees in river by ironworks:**
It has been noted that some clearing works have been going on in the area.
- xi. **Shop – early closing hours:**
No further information.

09.11.22 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Footway by quarry:**
No further information.
- ii. **Vobster speed limit:**
No further information.
- ii. **Fast traffic coming down Lime Kiln Hill:**
Highways has not responded to request for hatching/rubble bars. Clerk to chase.
- iii. **Vobster cross bridge:**
Highways has not responded. Clerk to chase.

10.11.22 PLANNING

- i. **New Applications:** None
- ii. **Planning decisions:** None
- iii. **Other planning matters – Old telephone exchange:**
Cllr Barkshire will contact Enforcement for an update. More work appears to be undertaken at the back of the building and it seems to be occupied overnight.
- iv. **Quarry applications:** No further information.

11.11.22 CORRESPONDENCE:

Somerset Local Authorities, Civil Contingencies Unit - Emergency contacts list: The current list is very out of date. Clerk to update and request volunteers for the empty roles.

Carter Jonas – rent increase: The lease was due for its 5 year review in September 2021. The new lease has been based on the increase in the Retail Prices Index which is calculated to be 16.5% which is an increase from £165/quarter to £192 per quarter. This will be back dated to last September when the next payment is due. Cllr Henderson raised that the review formula should be based on CPIH, rather than RPI as this would have resulted in an increase of around 11%. Carter Jonas has agreed to look into at the next review.

Mells with Vobster PCC grant: It was agreed to keep the grant at £2,500.

12.11.22 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: HSBC 28 October 2022 - £13,730.32

Barclays June 2022 - £5,320.32

i. **Payment of Accounts – for November**

Clerk's Salary & expenses (October)	£270.918
HMRC PAYE (Period 8)	£64.60
J W Witt (113296) emptying of bins at Rec Ground (DD)	£66.70
Defib Store – defibrillator signs for telephone box	£96.00
Mells Sport & Recreation Company – annual insurance	£1,012.58
Thrings Solicitor – Barn lease (to be re-imbursed)	£2,350.80

ii. **Receipts:** None

iii. **New bank account:** Clerk has collated most of the information required to begin the process.

iv. **Budget and precept:**

It was agreed in principle to keep the precept the same as this year (£13,000) to help with the rise in cost of living.

13.11.22 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. **Village looking untidy:**

The Chair has noticed that the village is generally looking unkempt and asked everyone to be more vigilant with noting areas of concern so the relevant action can be taken.

- ii. **Blocked drains – Selwood Street:** Cllr Seewooruttun to send locations to Clerk who will request that the debris is cleared from them.
- iii. **Dog waste bins:** The Chair commented that the bins are not being cleared frequently enough. Clerk to contact Mendip DC regarding frequency. Alternatively the option of larger bins or doubling up bins at the locations will be looked into.
- iv. **Please drive carefully signs - Vobster:** Cllr West asked if 'Please drive carefully' signs could be added to the Vobster village signs. The Trust was willing to contribute half the amount. Clerk to obtain prices.
- v. **Police contact:** Cllr Freeman to ask Alan Bradley if he would like to continue as the PC co-ordinator.

13.11.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 13 December 2022 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____