

**UNCONFIRMED**

**MELLS PARISH COUNCIL**

**(Mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)**

**Annual Parish Meeting**

was held at Mells Barn on Tuesday 9 May 2023 at 7.00 pm. John Earl was in the chair, supported by 6 members of the Council. 2 residents were present  
The Clerk, Joy Book and Somerset Councillor – Cllr Barry Clarke were in attendance.

**01.05.23APM MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING OF 10 MAY 2022**

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 May 2021 had been previously approved by the Council at the June 2022 monthly meeting and were taken as read.

**02.05.23APM APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Cllr Clare Asquith**

**03.05.23APM REPORT FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLOR:**

**Unitary authority:** Mendip District Council is now defunct. The new CEO of the Unitary authority, Duncan Sharkey, is keen to change the attitude of the employees within the council and improve customer experience. Cllr Clarke offered to assist the PC and residents with any issues they may experience with the new council. The council's constitution has been re-written and will be reviewed every 6 months. The PC were advised to look at it and note anything that seemed unsuitable and request its consideration to be changed.

**Local Community Networks:** Frome/Mells fall under LCN2. The first meeting is planned for 15 May.

**COVID injections:** These are now available for those over 75.

**Energy payments:** The payments to help businesses and residents with heating oil and gas finishes on 31 May.

**Plastic recycling:** Somerset has risen from 59<sup>th</sup> out of 228 authorities to 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Primary school admissions:** Nearly 99% of children received their first choice.

**05.05.23APM REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN, BARN COMMITTEE: (Presented by Cllr Earl)**

Barn bookings were accepted again after the COVID period and 2022 saw the return of wedding bookings which of course is the main source of our income. We experimented too with offering free start up periods for small non profit making clubs all groups. Making the barn even more user friendly to the local community.

The barn management committee is facing two major areas of concern the first is the increased Energy costs, at present the heaters cost about approximately £20 per hour to run as we charge zero to £10 an hour for Local groups and family parties it's easy to see this is not the best business plan. (We are hoping to encourage people to at least turn the heaters off when they have the paddock doors open) The profit from weddings is also vastly reduced as a three day wedding event one day set up, one day wedding, one day take down, can result in 20 hours of heater use which essentially cuts our Earning potential by half. If you think this is still somewhat insignificant one of our monthly bills this year was over £800.

A further concern is The diocese inability to produce a new lease although we can say that the PCC and the Barn Management committee have agreed a lease term and the annual rental fee.

Even with the present difficulties the Barn continues to cover its expenses The barn remains a great village asset and once the new lease is in place the management committee will be keen to go ahead with their plans to further improve the value to the community of this wonderful 600 year old building.

**06.05.23APM RECREATION GROUND REPORT: Mells Sports and Recreation Company** (written by Christopher Pike – Director of the Company, presented by the Clerk)

The pitches continue to be used by various football clubs (Mells/Vobster and various Frome/ children's teams) and also over the summer by two crickets teams (Mells and Frome). There are a very limited number of other adhoc scheduled events in the location, the main ones being the Mells 10k and Scenic Severn running events. The playground and car park are used on an ongoing basis, as are the playing fields for dog walking, kids kick arounds etc. Some renovation/upgrade work was undertaken in the pavilion during 2021/22, but unfortunately we suffered a burst water pipe during the cold spell just before Xmas and suffered substantial damage to the property. Builders are currently in repairing the damage (which was subject to an insurance claim) - that work should be completed imminently. The playground is having some work done on it over the summer (removing/replacing some equipment, repairing/smartening up other pieces). We are intending to replace the fencing around 3/4 of the tennis courts also in the near future. Any further work will be subject to fund raising efforts.

**07.05.23APM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON CURRENT YEAR'S ACTIVITIES** (presented by Cllr Earl)

The move to the new single unitary council has yet to have its effects filter down and we look forward to the promised efficiency savings

The parish council are aware of the pressure on households and have decided not to increase the precept this year. The council itself has had a fairly expensive year, Defibrillator expenses of £1783 The recreation ground Insurance and waste bin emptying come to almost £2000. New dog waste bins and fittings cost £1645, the regular churchyard grant of £2500, and much more, in-fact we spent £20444 on goods and services.

There are tasks however that are still not completed, the grass triangle opposite the post office has been ongoing for about three years due mainly to the incredibly slow pace of Mendip planning and highway depts. But all is not lost and all we are waiting for now is a Licence to start work.

A small number of the village are offering concerns over quarry noise. Councillor Steve West has been monitoring noise throughout points of the village, both evening and night time, for some months now. He has also offered to meet with people who are experiencing excessive noise so that he can help in identifying the type of noise and to assist in finding a solution.

We are currently looking to Co-opt two new counsellors and hopefully they will join us in June. This could be an interesting year perhaps with the completion of the grass triangle - an understanding of how the single unitary will affect us - and maybe even a resolution of the future of the old telephone exchange.

**08.05.23APM PARISH DISCUSSION FORUM:**

**Planning:** Resident raised with Cllr Clarke the difficulties they were experiencing with the planning department, no one answering the phone and the payment system seemingly still being Mendip District Council despite it no longer existing. Cllr Clarke responded that planning applications made via the Planning Portal will automatically go to the right address and as payment is by card no cheques are required and that he would be happy to address any issues if he was notified. Clerk to forward a list of the PC's current issues with planning, highways etc.

**Whatley Quarry:** At the recent liaison meeting the quarry reported that there have been no noise or vibration complaints for several months. Cllr West has offered to go out any time of day or night if contacted, with residents to investigate the source of the complaint. To date, this offer has not been taken up. The PC is actively involved with addressing issues via a representative who attends every quarry liaison meeting.

**END OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

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was held at Mells Barn on Tuesday 10 May 2023 at 7.00 pm. John Earl was in the chair, supported by 6 members of the Council. Two residents were present  
The Clerk, Joy Book and Somerset Councillor – Barry Clarke were in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**01.05.23APCM TO ELECT CHAIR FOR 2023/2024**

Nominations for the position of Chair were called. Cllr Henderson proposed Cllr John Earl. Cllr Seewooruttun seconded the proposal.

**02.05.22PACM TO ELECT VICE CHAIR FOR 2022/2023:**

Nominations for the position of Vice Chair were called. Cllr Earl proposed Cllr John Henderson. Cllr West seconded the proposal.

**03.05.23APCM SIGNING OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORMS:**

Cllr Earl and Cllr Henderson signed and dated the acceptance forms.

**04.05.23APCM REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

Police representative	Alan Brady
Quarry Liaison Committees representatives	Cllr West/Cllr Henderson
Footpaths	Alan Brady
Planning officers	Cllr Earl & Cllr Seewooruttun
Responsible Financial Officer	Joy Book, Clerk

The Chairman thanked the parishioners for taking the time to attend the meeting and closed the two annual meetings at 7.25pm.

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

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

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_