

UNCONFIRMED

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 14 May 2024

01.05.24 PRESENT: Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr Vince Turner
In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk
Members of the public: None

02.05.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Council

03.05.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

04.05.24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

05.05.24 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 9 APRIL 2024
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

06.05.24 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: (submitted prior to meeting)
Suez waste collection contract: The Council's waste contractor, SUEZ, has made a significant annual loss on its £24m a year contract. Negotiations are taking place for an adjustment to their payment. Without an increase, there is a risk that SUEZ may exit the contract which is for another 6 years. The ongoing rerouting of collections is helping make rounds more efficient and as cost effective as possible, but even with this, SUEZ considers the contract unviable.

Revised waste collection routes: Recycling and rubbish collection days are changing for 92,000 households in eastern parts of the county in June following changes made to the rest of the county earlier this year. From Monday June 17th, new collection routes are being introduced for many homes in the former South Somerset and Mendip districts. The new routes will make rounds more efficient, more manageable for crews while reducing mileage and carbon emissions. The changes come at no additional cost to the council.

Roadside grass-cutting: From May 2024, where safe to do so, mowing routines across managed highway verges, open spaces, country parks and council property grounds will be reduced although safety and visibility around verges and public spaces such as play areas will be cut more regularly. On wider verges, only a 1-meter swathe is mowed, leaving the rest untouched to maintain biodiversity. Further information on the cutting schedule can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/grass-cutting/>

Children and Young Peoples Plan: The new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for Somerset sets out the Council's aims for 2024-2030. Members of Somerset Youth Forum have suggested that the most important priorities are - Having a better experience in education, leading healthier live, help to improve your mental health, living in safer communities, building better relationships and being prepared for adulthood. The Council wants to encourage all individuals under the age of 25 to share their thoughts on these priorities via the online survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/dNHr44HCfn>

Volunteer Drivers: Since Covid-19 the numbers of volunteer drivers in Somerset has reduced by about 67 per cent. These dedicated drivers provide essential transportation services to residents so the Council are calling out for new volunteers. Many residents who need the service live in rural areas with little public transport. If you have at least half a day available and a car please consider volunteering. Volunteer drivers receive training and are reimbursed expenses at 45p per mile (or 50p per mile with passengers).

07.05.24 MATTERS ARISING

i. **Barn lease:** A rolling lease is currently in place whilst negotiations take place for a longer lease.

- ii. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** Discussions have begun regarding the lease.
- iii. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** No applications have been received to date.
- iv. **Silt under Vobster bridge:** No further information.
- v. **Old GPO box on verge – road to Leigh on Mendip:** Clerk to contact Openreach again.
- vi. **Crates by defibrillator – Post Office:** The shop is looking at either moving the bin slightly to allow the crates to be placed by it or placing them at the back of the shop if the plans to erect some storage goes ahead.
- vii. **Trees overhanging telephone lines – Little Green:** Clerk to contact Openreach.
- viii. **‘Queens Canopy’ – tree planting:** Cllr Asquith confirmed that some trees will be planted at Longfield.
- ix. **Quarry noise:** This appears to affect just a few houses which are in direct line of the quarry. The main issue reported by Cllr Asquith is the grinding of the lorry gears as they negotiate the steep climb up to the surface with the stock. Cllr West will investigate if the quarry is able to move the stock to the surface in the afternoon or to another place to avoid the movements in the middle of the night. Noise is at it’s worse when the wind is south westerly.

08.05.24 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** The area will be flattened and seeded once the weather improves. The gap by the road edge has been filled with gravel from the quarry today. A contractor will need to be found to cut the grass.
- ii. **Overgrown bush by Honeysuckle Cottage, Vobster:** Clerk to contact Highways again.
- iii. **Stone baskets on Park Corner:** Cllr Henderson reported that he has raised the matter with the quarry as the area is on their boundary.
- iv. **Fingerposts by Vobster Inn and leaning post top of Conduit Hill:** Cllr West will take a look at what is required to straighten the one at the top of Conduit Hill and remove the vegetation. The painting contractor is arranging for someone to fix the moving post at Vobster.
- v. **Road to cycle path:** This has been very muddy but the recent dry spell has helped.

09.05.24 PLANNING

- i. **New applications:**
 - 2024/0620/FUL:** Erection of dwelling and creation of parking, turning and access area – Prospect Cottage, Top Lane. Clerk to request that the parking area is created prior to the work to enable the works vans to be parked off the road.
 - 2024/0661/CLP:** Application for a proposed lawful development certificate for stationing of mobile home within the garden of Bridge Cottage – Bridge Cottage, Holes Lane. Clerk to request that provision for parking for the mobile home should be made on the site.
 - SCC/4095/2024:** Restoration of Lime Kiln Hill Quarry – Lime Kiln Quarry – no objections. The access point further up the hill is considered an improvement.
 - 2024/0823/HSE:** Small utility room extension, front and rear porches, modifications of some openings – Rock Edge, Mells Green to Little Green – no objections.
- ii. **Planning decisions:** None
- iii. **Other planning matters:**
 - a) **Old telephone exchange:** No response received from the Enforcement Officer.
 - b) **Quarry applications:**
 - SCC/3837/2021/IDO:** This permission covers the Asham Wood void area and extends across an area of 32.3ha – This application was formally withdrawn on 7 May 2024.

10.05.24 CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. **Fast traffic by Claveys Farm:** Resident has raised concerns regarding the speed of traffic in this area. Clerk to look into what is required to have speed camera signs placed on the 30mph post in the hope this will deter drivers. *Post meeting note: PSCO Louise Perry has reported that there were over 50 prosecutions in Mells for speeding in 2023.*

- ii. **SALC training sessions:** Various sessions are available via zoom. Clerk to forward information to Cllr Brady and Cllr Freeman.

11.05.24 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds: 30 April 2024 – £17,734.01
Barclays at 20 March 2024 - £10,394.07

i. **Payment of accounts:**

Clerk’s Salary & expenses (April)	£319.57
HMRC PAYE (Period 2)	£76.60
J W Witt – bin emptying (133807)	£71.09
12 Cloud monthly payroll fee	£6.00

ii. **Receipts:** Precept - £15,000

- vi. **Barclays account:** Cllr Henderson and Cllr Earl are trying to arrange the facility to transfer the money monthly between the two accounts to keep the Barclays account live.

12.05.24 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **War memorial:** The war memorial is looking untidy due to the change at the Walled Garden who used to take on this responsibility. It is hoped that the contractor who cuts the grass triangle, will be willing to undertake it’s maintenance.
- ii. **Footpath strimming:** The Alms Houses and Drums Hill footpath need strimming back. Clerk to contact Contractor.
- iii. **Dog waste bins:** The one at Fairview is overflowing. Clerk to contact Somerset Council.
- iv. **Fete:** This was a great success. The ‘entry’ fee system is actually illegal and a donation should have been requested.

14.04.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 11 June 2024 at **7.15pm** in the Barn

Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____