

**UNCONFIRMED**

**MELLS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)**

**Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 8 October 2024**

- 01.10.24 PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl – Chair, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Vince Turner  
**In Attendance:** Joy Book – Clerk  
**Members of the public:** 0
- 02.10.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Council
- 03.10.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Vince Turner declared an interest planning application 2024/1721/AGE.
- 04.10.24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None
- 05.10.24 APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 13 AUGUST 2024**  
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.10.24 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: (report emailed in absence)**
- i. Commercial Investments:** Somerset Council has completed the sale of several of their commercial Investments in response to the financial emergency.
  - ii. Reducing carbon emissions:** Somerset Council is encouraging businesses to reduce their carbon emissions by registering for the Go Green Scheme. To find out more and to register interest visit  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/net-zero-for-business/>
  - iii. Devolution proposals:** Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire Councils have submitted an expressions of interest in devolution.
  - v. Recycling centre winter opening times:** All Somerset Council's recycling sites have now reverted to their autumn/winter opening schedule. Sites will be open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm at the weekend. Opening days vary across all sites midweek, however all sites are open on a Saturday and Sunday.
  - vi. School places:** Somerset parents and carers of children due to start school or move on to their next school in September 2025 are being urged to apply for their place online and on time. Parents and carers of children due to transfer to Secondary or Upper School can apply for places for their children until 31 October 2024. Please visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/starting-at-a-secondary-or-upper-school-in-september/> Parents and carers of children due to start school for the first time or transfer to Junior or Middle School can apply for places for their children from 30 September 2024 until 15 January 2025. Please visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/apply-to-start-school-for-the-first-time/>
  - vii. Parking text scams:** Fraudulent text messages about unpaid parking fines (PCN) have been sent to some Somerset residents claiming to be from the council. If you receive one of these texts, it is not from Somerset Council and may be a scam. If anyone is unsure if the text is real, they should contact the Council. In addition suspicious text messages should be forwarded to 7726. This free-of-charge short code enables your provider to investigate the text.
  - viii. Recycling rates:** 296,000 kerbside recycling collections are made each week, and the recycling taken to the county's recycling sites shows that more than 130,000 tonnes of carbon was saved last year (equivalent to taking 50,000 cars off the road for a year). Nearly 96% of the

recycling material stayed in the UK to be turned into new products and packaging, including more than 99% of plastics.

- ix. **Flu and Covid vaccinations:** Adults over the age of 65 will be eligible for a flu jab starting from 3 October. The flu vaccine is also available at the same time with other vaccines such as the COVID-19 and shingles vaccines. More information and booking is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/book-flu-vaccination/>

#### 07.11.24 MATTERS ARISING

- i. **Barn lease:** Cllr Earl had previously circulated a draft lease for reading/comment. The length of the lease was noted as being incorrect (stated as 20 years) despite the Estate agreeing that the length could be 25 or 30 years. All were in favour of approving the lease once the amendments had been made without consulting a solicitor.
- ii. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** The Company Directors will attend the November meeting.
- iii. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** One person has expressed an interest. Clerk to follow up.
- iv. **Trees overhanging telephone line – Little Green:** Cllr Brady reported that he had seen works being carried out further up the road and the contractor had reported they had further works in the area scheduled, so it is hoped that this tree will be included.
- v. **Silt under Vobster bridge:** No further information.
- vi. **BT Cabinet:** This has now been removed.

#### 08.11.24 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** The area still requires levelling and Cllr Turner will arrange for someone to do this when he is less busy.
- ii. **Fast traffic by Claveys Farm:** Highways has been given a couple of suitable locations where the speed camera signs can be placed.
- iii. **Park Corner:** Highways has deemed the stones on the verge as being safe. Cllr Seewooruttun reports all the accidents she hears about on this junction to Highways. Very few accidents are on file to date. Unless they are reported, no additional action will be taken without evidence to show there is a safety issue.
- iv. **White lines – Woodlands End:** These have been reinstated. The give way sign has been turned back slightly, but is still not fully visible.
- v. **Traffic on Holes Lane:** Options are being looked into.
- iv. **Speeding cars through Vobster:** This is being monitored by the police.
- v. **Dirty fingerposts/signs near the quarry:** Whatley PC is looking into getting the fingerpost refurbished and the quarry have indicated they would clean the other signs.
- vi. **White lines – Woodlands End:** These have been reinstated.
- vii. **Streetlights – Longfield:** All the lights have finally been repaired, six months after the first report.
- viii. **Overgrown vegetation on triangle at top of Lime Kiln Road:** The vegetation is not causing an issue now.
- ix. **Fingerpost on triangle at top of Lime Kiln Road:** This has been refurbished.

#### 09.10.24 PLANNING

- i. **New applications:**
  - 2024/1721/AGE:** Prior notification of agricultural development – construction of a slurry lagoon above existing ground level – Finger Farm – no objections
  - 2024/1683/LBC:** Conversion of a store room to a gym for the use of the owners – Mells Park House – no objections.
- ii. **Planning decisions:** None
- iii. **Other planning matters:**
  - a) **Old telephone exchange:** No further information.

b) **Quarry applications:** No further information.

**10.10.24 CORRESPONDENCE:**

- i. **SALC – gov.uk website address and email addresses for councillors:** All parish councils must comply with WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards from October 2024 and it is also recommended that a gov.uk domain is used. The current website is around 84% accessible (anything under 100% is considered not suitable). Clerk has made some enquiries and had previously submitted financial information on the options available. £100 funding is available until February 2025 to help with costs. It was agreed to use the services of Easy Website to change the website to a fully accessible one (£250) and have two dedicated email addresses. One for the clerk (included in monthly fee) and another for the chair (additional £2.20/month) which would be easily transferable if one left the council. There would be an ongoing cost of £30.80 which includes the .gov domain, the clerk’s email domain, the new website, and ongoing support as requested.

**11.10.24 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Bank account: Lloyds: 25 July – £7,497.93  
Barclays at 20 September 2024 - £13,470.47

i. **Payment of accounts – August & September**

Clerk’s Salary & expenses (August)	£319.57
HMRC PAYE (Period 6)	£76.60
Clerk’s Salary & expenses (September)	£319.57
HMRC PAYE (Period 7)	£76.60
J W Witt – bin emptying (141280)	£76.42
J W Witt – bin emptying (142429)	£79.42
Somerset Association of Local Councils – outstanding invoices	£53.00
Arborcadabra – weedkilling rec ground	£78.00
Viscount Asquith’s 1999 Settlement Trust	£192.00
British Legion – wreath and donation	£50.00
Nigel Dunster – war memorial tidy	£30.00

ii. **Receipts:** Barclays interest - £40.61

iii. **Barclays account – setting up monthly direct debit:** Cllr Henderson has been in contact with the bank and the only way to instruct them to do this is via letter. Clerk to action.

**12.10.24 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

- i. **Remembrance Sunday:** Cllr Seewooruttun will be available if Cllr Earl is unable to make the ceremony.
- ii. **Local PCSO:** Cllr Brady mentioned the tractors going up Top Lane to a PCSO who was able to witness one doing this. The Estate has now requested that all their contractors drive up Lime Kiln Hill instead.
- iii. **Barn car park:** This is not a PC matter however, Cllr Earl reported that it will be levelled and concreted in the future, but no date has been set.
- iv. **Wooden finger posts:** Some of these require attention. Clerk to contact the footpath officer.
- vi. **Halecombe Quarry Community Fund:** Applications for the fund were undersubscribed on this tranche and awareness needs to encourage local organisations to apply.
- vii. **Torr Quarry:** Looking to employ 45 people.
- viii. **Graffiti on Vobster Shelter:** This was noted recently. No action at present.

**13.10.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 12 November at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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

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