

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

**Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 10 December 2024**

- 01.12.24 PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl – Chair, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Clare Asquith  
**In Attendance:** Joy Book – Clerk  
**Members of the public:** 0
- 02.12.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr Vince Turner  
Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Council)
- 03.12.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 04.12.24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**
- 05.12.24 APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2024**  
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.12.24 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** (forwarded in absence)
- i. **Proposed changes to council tax reduction scheme:** Somerset Council is bringing forward proposals which protect its 100% Council Tax discount for working age residents on the lowest incomes. Many of the proposals, such as those which protect carers and disabled residents, were removed by the council's Executive in July this year. Following feedback from the public and the council's Scrutiny process, the revised proposals now being considered would help the council save £3.9m a year. These include:
- Protecting the 100% discount offered to working age adults on the very lowest incomes, while reducing the other discount bands to 50%, 25% and 10%.
  - Continuing the current system of exempting certain income, such as that from disability benefits, carers allowance and child benefit, as well as the first £25 of employment income from the income calculations.
  - Retaining the policy of providing a discount to care leavers, foster carers and special guardians (but funding it from the Exceptional Hardship scheme).
  - Reducing the discount by £10 per week for each non-dependent adult living in a property.
  - Limiting the discount available to the maximum available for a band D property.
  - Reducing the period of backdating claims to 1 calendar month.
- 07.12.24 MATTERS ARISING**
- i. **Barn lease:** Only one signature is required to be witnessed by a solicitor so Cllr Henderson will arrange for this to take place. Cllr Earl will add the second signature at the next parish council meeting.
- ii. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** No further information.
- iii. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** No further information.
- iv. **Trees overhanging telephone line – Little Green:** National Grid will do a survey to establish whether it is their responsibility but it is currently low priority due to the recent storms and the extra work this has created.
- v. **Quarry noise:** The quarry has responded to a recent resident's complaint who is experiencing increased acoustics in their back garden. The quarry has stated that:-
- No activity now takes place at the primary crusher between 23.30 - 06.30 each night between Monday – Friday (a **27% reduction** in weekly hours compared to the quarry's operating permissions)
  - The commencement of secondary breaking or drilling above level 4 in the quarry is now delayed until 07.00 and the suspension of this activity completely at weekends.

It is hoped that a meeting between the quarry, Cllr West and the resident can be arranged to discuss a way forward.

- vi. **Trees in Vobster graveyard:** The trees could become a threat to the wall in the future and this needs to be prevented before it is an issue. PCC and the parish council will inspect.

#### 08.12.24 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane:** Awaiting levelling and seeding in the spring. Cllr Asquith will approach the resident who wishes to plant a memorial tree so planting can take place before the spring/growing season.
- ii. **Area in front of Vobster Inn:** Cllr Seviour is looking into this.
- iii. **Speeding vehicles in Vobster:** Clerk is awaiting a response from Highways. There will be many steps to work through to get a reduced speed limit through the village.
- iv. **Park Corner:** No further information.
- v. **Vobster Cross junction – reinstatement of markings:** Due to the weather conditions at this time of year the work cannot be carried out until sometime in the new financial year.
- vi. **Damaged bridge – Vobster Cross:** Somerset Bridge department has requested further information on the location of the bridge which has been forwarded to them.
- vii. **Speeding traffic – Lime Kiln Hill:** Police having agreed that calming measures are required and will contact Highways with a request for rumble bars.

#### 09.12.24 PLANNING

- i. **New applications:** None
- ii. **Planning decisions:** None
- iii. **Other planning matters:**
  - a) **Old telephone exchange:** No further information.
  - b) **Quarry applications:** No further information.

#### 10.12.24 CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. **Email Somerset Council regarding bin emptying costs from April 2025:** It has now been established that the previously quoted price of £12.50 was incorrect. The correct price is £6.50. Clerk has spoken to Shaun Robinson who is currently responsible for cutting the churchyards who is interested in carrying out this service. All present agreed that having someone within the village, who could respond promptly to a request to empty a bin that was overflowing before the next scheduled emptying, would be an advantage. Clerk to request that Mr Robinson commences in April 2025 when the costs come into being.

#### 11.12.24 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds: 3 December – £6,317.75  
Barclays at 20 September 2024 - £13,470.47

- i. **Payment of accounts – December**

Clerk's Salary & expenses (November + back pay)	£457.14
HMRC PAYE (Period 9)	£111.00
Mells with Vobster churchyard grant	£2,500
Mendip Citizens Advice	£200.00
Nigel Dunster – war memorial tidy	£20.00
- ii. **Receipts:** None
- iii. **Barclays account – setting up monthly direct debit:** Barclays claim to have not received the letter of instruction. Clerk to bring another copy to the next meeting for signing.
- iv. **Clerk's salary increase for 2024/25:** The Clerk is on SCP Point 7 which has risen from £12.63 to £13.26 for this current year (£230 increase per annum) to be back dated to April 2024. All present approved.

- v. **Preliminary budget and precept discussion:** The clerk had previously circulated a draft budget. Cllr Earl mentioned that he would like to see an amount added for the general upkeep of the village eg. weeding. Clerk to add.

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

- i. **Bus shelter graffiti – Vobster:** Cllr Brady will look into costs of graffiti paint etc and Clerk will try to get other quotes for comparison.
- ii. **Recent storms:** Cllr Brady commended the highways department on their very quick action to remove trees and debris from the highway after the recent storms.

**13.12.24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm.

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

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