

UNCONFIRMED

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 12 December 2023

- 01.12.23 PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Steve West, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Claire Freeman
In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Barry Clarke - Mendip Central and East Somerset Councillor
Members of the public: 0
- 02.12.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr John Henderson, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Vince Turner
- 03.12.23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 04.12.23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None
- 05.12.23 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023**
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.12.23 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:**
- i. **2023/4 Financial Position: Council's Financial Position:** The overspend for 2023/24 has reduced from £27m to £19m, while the budget gap for 2024/25 has reduced from £100m to £87m. Proposals to further decrease the gap include:
- Increases to parking, planning fees, harbour fees, registrations ceremonies and green waste collections
 - Reduction in library services, leisure provision, theatres, visitor centres and heritage services
 - Reduction or cessation of CCTV provision
 - Reduction in maintenance of ditches, grips, drains, gullies, grass and hedge cutting, weed treatment, road markings, signs and paths.
 - Reduction in funding for active travel, bus services and highways safety schemes including school crossing patrols
 - Reduction in the number of Household Waste Recycling centres
- ii. **Closure of A Block, County Hall:** Customers who need to talk to Somerset Council staff face to face will need to visit Deane House from December 2023.
- iii. **Changes to waste collection days:** Recycling and rubbish collection days will be changing for more than 120,000 homes in Somerset in February next year. It is important that residents know their new collection days as crews will not be able to come back for either recycling or refuse for missed collections. Garden Waste collection dates are unaffected.
- iv. **National Landscapes:** From November all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales became National Landscapes, including Somerset's Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, and Blackdown Hills National Landscapes.
- vi. **Fight against Domestic Abuse:** Somerset Council has commissioned 12 short films to shine the spotlight on non-physical types of domestic abuse. The films direct anyone who is experiencing these forms of abuse to www.somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk, where they can get more information, support and advice or by contacting the service on 0800 69 49 999.
- vi. **Parish boundaries:** There will be no changes to the parish boundaries. However, if Somerset council goes bankrupt the Local Community Networks will fold as there will not be the money to support them. If this occurs, parishes maybe encouraged to join up with those parishes which touch their boundaries to share issues and contractors etc.

- vii. **Planning review:** Due to the review, Somerset needs to build 505 new homes so the council is more likely to look favourably on planning proposals put in front of them. A site on the south side of the A361 is being looked at for commercial development.

07.12.23 MATTERS ARISING

- i. **Barn lease:** Negotiations are ongoing. Cllr Brady will look into sourcing some scalplings for the large dip at the Barn entrance.
- ii. **Pavilion improvements:** PC are meeting the Company directors next month to discuss the current/ongoing costs and financial commitments.
- iii. **Overgrown bush by Honeysuckle Cottage, Vobster:** Clerk to follow up with Highways.
- iv. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** The legal notification period ends on 19 December. If less than 10 electors request an election the PC will be free to go ahead with co-option.

08.12.23 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** No further works will be carried out until the spring. A cyclist had commented that they were very pleased to see the provision of the bike racks but due to their positioning and the footwear keen cyclists use, they were possibly being under utilised due to cyclists not wanting to get their feet wet. A possible solution would be to put a gravel path to the racks. Cllr Seviour is looking into getting the planters for placement in front of the Vobster Inn.
- i. **Accidents on Park Corner:** Clerk to follow up.
- ii. **HGVs – Top Road:** More lorries have been witnessed entering the village. Clerk to follow up with Highways.

09.12.23 PLANNING

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

10.12.23 CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. **Mells with Vobster PCC:** Thank you for graveyard donation.
- ii. **Mells Shop Committee – triangle of land:** Concern regarding lack of consultation and reduced parking because of the stones. The matter has been in the minutes for over three years and there were notices up on the area for the consultation period which lasted several weeks, notifying of the proposed changes. Available parking in the area maybe reduced by a few cars but this would not significantly impact on the shop/café's trade. Cllr Asquith has responded.

11.12.23 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds: 29 November – £11,357.89
Barclays at 20 September 2023 - £5,355.32

- i. **Payment of accounts:**
- | | |
|--|---------|
| Clerk's Salary & expenses (November) + salary increase backpay
To April 2023 (£1 x 213 hrs) | £489.61 |
| HMRC PAYE (Period 9) | £119.20 |
| J W Witt – bin emptying (130281) | £71.09 |
| C G Rowe – War memorial hedge cutting | £90.00 |
- ii. **Receipts:** £1,000 – Mells Park solar array annual grant
- v. **Preliminary budget and precept discussion for 2024/25:** Final decision to be made at the January meeting.

12.12.23 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **Pothole – near Vobster bridge:** Clerk to report to Highways.

- ii. **Torr liaison meeting:** There have been no complaints since the last meeting. They are hoping to bring more of the work inhouse rather than using contractors.
 - iii. **Vobster noticeboards:** The one at Upper Vobster probably needs replacement and the one at Lower Vobster, requires a repair to the door. Cllr Brady to assess.
 - iv. **LCN's – councillor to attend:** Another councillor needs to attend these meetings now Karen Punter is no longer on the council. To be discussed at the next meeting.
- 13.12.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 9 January 2024 at the later time of **8.00pm** in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____