

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on
Tuesday 12 July 2022

01.07.22 PRESENT:

Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, John Henderson, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Claire Freeman

In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Alison Barkshire – District Councillor

Members of the public: None

02.07.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr Vince Turner, Cllr Karen Punter, Cllr Seviour
Absent: None

03.07.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

04.07.22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

05.07.22 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT:

i. **Unitary authority:** It is hoped that the Chief Exec will be appointed by 20th July. It is proving a challenge bringing the five councils budgets together which is now also being exacerbated by inflation. The original projected shortfall of £28m in council budgets has almost doubled due to surging inflation. The County Council had reported a balanced budget for the year, but now faces an overspend in the current year, again due to inflation and a rise in costs in “demand-driven” care services. Every council in the country will be dealing with the same issue. All the councils had started from a position of comparative strength, but it will still be very challenging. Management feels that the creation of the Unitary Authority, making it a larger structure, will help to make Somerset more resilient. The expectation is that the essentials will be in place from day one; then there will be a period of aligning teams and systems with everything in place by April 2025.

ii. **Electric Car Charging points - 22kW Alfen Twin chargers.**

MDC is installing 43 electric vehicle charging points this summer in 13 Council owned car parks, in all the towns. There will be 3 chargers in each of the following car parks in Frome - Cattle Market, North Parade and Badcox.

iii. **Street Rubbish**

Investment in new street sweepers has enabled teams to collect, on average, an additional 125 tonnes of debris every month. In the past few months, over 1000 tonnes of waste has been collected from our streets.

iv. **Somerset:**

Over the past 10 years there has been a 10.1% increase in the number of households (4% above the national average) equaling 27,000 households or 40,000 people. The national average population aged over 65 is 18 % where as in Somerset it is 25%

v. **Somerset Travel website - think travel:**

A new journey planning website for Somerset has been launched - <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>. It gives information on: Public transport, Community transport, demand responsive transport (Slinky) and Car sharing through a dedicated noticeboard area. Details can also be found on the parish council website.

06.07.22 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: None

07.07.22 APPROVAL OF THE MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 14 JUNE 2022

Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

08.07.22 MATTERS ARISING

i. Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:

Cllr Seewooruttun had drawn out a plan of the spacing for the tubs and stones but it was suggested that a chain could be run between some stones to reduce the number of tubs required from 10 to 5. The plan will be revised to reflect the changes and forwarded to Highways for approval.

ii. Telephone box:

Painting is scheduled for September.

iii. Quarry noise:

Cllr Barkshire had received a complaint that it was very noisy a couple of nights ago. The trains are loaded late evening as they cannot be moved during the day due to passenger trains using the lines. The last of the 5 trucks will be rubber lined in September. To be monitored.

iv. Rectory bus shelter:

Clerk to follow up with the Estate.

v. White Bridge – overhanging tree and railings:

Clerk to seek quotes for an additional rail.

09.07.22 BARN LEASE

This is being progressed.

10.07.22 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

i. Footway by quarry:

Cllr West is meeting with the quarry to discuss what would be required to provide a safe footway along the road by the quarry entrance. The quarry is holding an open day on 16 September 11.00am-2.00pm.

11.07.22 PLANNING

i. New Applications:

2022/1194/HSE: Creation of new access, turning and parking area – Prospect Cottage: No comments

ii. Planning decisions: None

iii. Other planning matters - Vobster telephone exchange:

Awaiting further response from the Enforcement Officer.

iv. Quarry applications:

SCC/3795/2021, SCC/3836/2021, SCC/3837/2021, SCC/3838/2021 – Westdown Quarry: Revised applications to include additional requested documentation. Clerk to re-send previous comments.

Cllr West reported that there are plans to move the blockworks to the other side of the A361 and remove 11 million tonnes from where the blockworks are currently. Some trees would need to be removed although these would be replaced and banks would be put in before quarrying would start. Whatley and Torre are going down to sea level. Wessex water believe there will be a water shortage in 30 years time due to expanded use and climate change so there are proposals to use Tor quarry as a reservoir. Water will be pumped from the river Avon in Bath to this proposed newly formed reservoir. If completed the reservoir would hold more water than Chew Valley lake. It is likely that the water would be used to service many areas in the South including London.

12.07.22 CORRESPONDENCE: None

13.07.22 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: HSBC 28 June 2022 - £19,0454.39

Barclays March 2022 - £5,318.15

i. Payment of Accounts:

Clerk's Salary & expenses (April)	£271.11
HMRC PAYE (Period 4)	£64.40
J W Witt (110970) emptying of bins at Rec Ground (DD)	£64.54
Bunting/printing for Platinum Jubilee	£100.03

ii. Receipts: None

iii. New bank account: Clerk is still looking into options.

14.07.22 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. Faded road markings:

The lines on the junction of Lime Kiln Hill and Great Elm have faded. Clerk to contact Highways.

ii. Entrance to Barn:

This will be sorted when the Barn lease is approved and the status of its future is secured.

iii. Footpath Officers:

One person from Mells and two from Vobster are interested in taking on the role. Clerk to forward the Somerset Footpath Officer's contact information.

iv. Debris in river:

Trees are being cut down due to Ash dieback and any debris in the river on quarry land will be cleared once the felling has been completed. The felling has been overseen by the Ecological Department.

v. Duck race:

The proposed route for the race would be currently hampered by the trees in the water en route. Cllr Seewooruttun to find out who the owner of the land is as they have riparian rights to clear any debris which borders their land to the mid point of the river.

16.07.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 9 August at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____