

UNCONFIRMED

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

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

01.09.23 PRESENT:

Cllr John Earl - Chair, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Clare Asquith, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Karen Punter

In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Barry Clarke - Mendip Central and East Somerset Councillor

Members of the public: 0

02.09.23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr John Henderson, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Vince Turner,

03.09.23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Asquith declared an interest in 09.09.23 i. 2023/1572/FUL.

04.09.23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

05.09.23 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

- i. **Council Finances:** Somerset Council has warned that it will have to draw on reserves for the second successive year to meet its budget for 2023/24. A recent Executive report describes the council's financial position as "stark and challenging". The latest budget gap for the current year is £28.6m. The papers reveal that the Council has already drawn £18 million from reserves to fund spending beyond the 2022/23 budgets. If the council continues to pull from reserves at this rate, it is highly likely to be heading for bankruptcy a few years.
- ii. **Covid autumn booster programme:** As a result of a newly identified variant the Covid-19 vaccine programme is being brought forward by one month and offered to those at high risk of serious disease and who are therefore most likely to benefit from the vaccination. Booster vaccinations start week commencing 11 September.
- iii. **Flu vaccinations:** Flu vaccinations for children will be prioritised and available from September which is hoped will break the chain of transmission to the wider population. School aged children will be able to get the flu vaccine at school or at community clinics. Children aged two and three years will be able to get an appointment with their GP practice. The JCVI has recommended adults over the age of 65 and those with underlying health conditions will be eligible for a flu with the offer starting from early October.
- iv. **Roundabout sponsorship:** Local businesses are being invited to take advantage of roundabout sponsorship to advertise socially responsible goods and services. The space is available for advertising a wide range of goods and services. The new ethical advertising policy means that the Council will not sanction certain adverts such as those promoting junk food, fossil fuels, gambling or consumption of alcoholic drinks. The money generated by the initiative will go back into the Council's highways maintenance budget.
- v. **Gambling Policy Consultation:** Under the Gambling Act 2005 Somerset Council must review its Gambling Policy every three years. Comments are invited on the draft revised Gambling Policy from all interested parties including residents and those running businesses in the County, the consultation documents can be found at <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/licensing/gambling-policy-consultation>. The consultation closes on 22nd September 2023
- vi. **Single use plastics ban:** Trading Standards are reminding businesses, such as takeaways, sandwich bars, care homes and retailers who supply certain single use plastic items, that a ban comes into force October 1st. The ban includes all single use plastic cutlery, trays, plates,

bowls, and balloon sticks, as well as banning the use of certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers used to supply food which is ready to consume.

- vii. **Soft plastics recycling:** More than four tonnes of plastic bags and wrapping such as bread bags and confectionary packets, have been collected for recycling as part of the Council's role in a national project to expand recycling collections. The small-scale pilot involving 3,600 homes across two locations in Frome started at the end of May.
- viii. **Planning Inspectorate:** After a judicial review, Mendip now has to find suitable areas for 505 new houses to be built which will increase the likelihood of approvals being given.
- ix. **Local Community Networks:** Cllr Clarke encouraged the PC to attend these meetings and have a voice. Cllr Punter has been attending the meetings and mentioned that the agenda and last minutes are available on the Somerset website. The next meeting is being held in October at Buckland Dinham and Cllr Punter thought it would be beneficial to offer to host a meeting in Mells as the 'Frome' LCN has 18 rural villages within its boundaries.

06.09.23 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 11 JULY 2023

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

07.09.23 MATTERS ARISING

- i. **Barn lease:** The Chair raised whether the PC should be removed from the lease so it would be between the Management Committee, Diocese and Parochial Church Council. Thoughts on the matter/concerns were requested to be made within a fortnight so progress is not held up. Currently if the Management Committee fails, the Barn comes back under PC control. Under this new proposal, the Barn would revert to the Parochial Church Council's control thus relinquishing the PC of any future responsibilities.
- ii. **Pavilion improvements:** The application has been approved. Works to improve the play area have begun.
- iii. **Allotments on edge of parish:** The Estate Manager would prefer only one entrance/exit point at the southern end of the site as they believe the allotment traffic does not make any meaningful difference to the usage of the entrance. An adjacent landowner is also concerned that opening up the north side will cause anti social behaviour on Tinkers Lane.
- iv. **Overgrown bush by Honeysuckle Cottage, Vobster:** Clerk has written to owner. No action has been taken yet but this maybe due to bird nesting/holiday season. To follow up next month. The hedge now forces pedestrians further into the road.

08.09.23 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** One objection was received during the consultation period but it has subsequently been resolved. The licence has been signed by the Chair but further signatures are required which will be actioned in the next day or so.
- ii. **Footway by quarry:** The quarry has cut back the hedge by approximately two foot which allows pedestrians to walk along the verge.
- iii. **Vobster – drive carefully signs:** These have been installed. However the one that was previously by Lakeside has been installed by the bus shelter with one post near the edge of the road which is likely to get hit. A photo will be sent to Highways. The final price for the signs is £678.10 which is significantly cheaper than the last quote received which was £1000.91. Vobster trust has already reimbursed half of the costs (£339.05), as agreed.
- iv. **Passing places – Selwood Street:** Highways has confirmed that the H bars will be reinstated.
- v. **Accidents on Park Corner:** Clerk to chase and request rumble bars as well.
- vi. **Fingerposts:** Clerk will contact contractor.
- vii. **HGVs – Top Road:** Clerk to chase Highways again and request No HGV signs.

09.09.23 PLANNING

i. New Applications:

2023/1607/TCA: Fell – Willow, 4-5 Egypt Cottages – For Tree Officer

2023/1377/TCA: Fell – Eucalyptus, Kerry Cottage, Little Green - For Tree Officer

2023/1572/FUL: Erection of 1 dwelling and creation of parking, turning and access – No objections

ii. Planning decisions: Pavillion extension – approved.

iii. Other planning matters:

a) Old telephone exchange: Awaiting further information from the Enforcement Officer.

10.09.23 CORRESPONDENCE:

i. Email from resident concerning ‘Queens Canopy’ of trees: Cllr Asquith will look into the status of the tree planting.

11.09.23 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds: 1 September – £15,004.99

Barclays at 20 June 2023 - £5,341.01

i. Payment of Accounts:

Clerk’s Salary & expenses (July & August) £348.54 & £295.24

HMRC PAYE (Period 5 & 6) £13.70 & £70.60

J W Witt – bin emptying (126263) 71.60

Somerset Council – Signs for Vobster £678.10

ii. Receipts: £339.05 from Vobster Trust

12.09.23 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. Speeding lorry: A lorry with the Tarmac logo on its side was seen speeding down the green and up Knapton’s Hill at 10.00pm on 5 September. The driver behind was unable to get the registration plate as they could not get close enough.

ii. Flytipping in Longfield and by Glebe House and the bus shelter: Any flytipping can be reported to Somerset Council <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/how-to-fight-fly-tipping/> or telephone 0300 123 2224.

iii. Vobster motorbikes: A resident has complained that there is an increase in motorbikes around the village. Cllr West said he thought they were connected with the bike nights. Cllr Brady to raise it with the police.

iv. Bike racks on triangle of land: A couple of councillors felt these looked out of place and are not immediately obvious that they are bike racks. To be reviewed once the area is levelled and the stones are in place.

v. Graffiti on signs: Cllr Brady reported that he had been going around the village removing any he finds.

vi. Western Skip: This has been sold to Pennys. No more refuse will be brought to site and they are in the process of levelling the land.

13.09.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.3 5pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____

