

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL
(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Minutes of the remote meeting held via Zoom of Mells Parish Council on
Tuesday 8 December 2020**

01.12.20 PRESENT:

Cllr J Earl – Chair, Cllr John Henderson, Cllr E Costelloe, The Countess of Oxford & Asquith, Cllr Seewooruttun, Cllr D Seviour

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

Members of the public: None

02.12.20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr V Turner, Cllr S West, Cllr H Leahey

03.12.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

04.12.20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

05.12.20 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES HELD ON 13 OCTOBER

Previously circulated. A couple of changes were made to correct items 08.11.20 iv. & 08.11.20 vi. The minutes were then approved and pp'd by the Clerk

06.12.20 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

- i. **Connecting Devon & Somerset:** CDS is believed to have signed a contract with a company today but it is unknown who with. Cllr Barkshire will follow this up.

07.12.20 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

None submitted

08.12.20 MATTERS ARISING

i. **Superfast Broadband:**

Openreach has been difficult to contact in the past month and there has been no movement forward. Other options may be revisited if there is nothing forthcoming from them soon. Clerk has made initial enquiries with Openreach for an installation in Vobster. Cllr Seviour will circulate the information and take the details of anyone interested in signing up.

ii. **Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane:**

It has been established that Highways own the land not the Estate. It is unlikely that Highways would entertain any expenditure on the area to landscape it or improve it for parking on. A plan will be drawn up and submitted to Highways for their comments. The Estate would be happy to supply the materials and the PC would be willing to fund the building works. Clerk reported that the Mells Park Estate solar array grant of £1,000 has just been received. The grant was not used last year so there is £2,000 in the account towards community projects that benefit the village which could be used towards these works.

iii. **Telephone box – painting:**

Clerk to contact previous painter for quote to completely strip, prime and top coat several times.

iv. **New Community Trust:**

It was agreed that it would be wise to wait for the issue of increased noise at the quarry, especially at night, to be resolved before making a proposal to the quarry. The proposal should be available for when the application to deepen the quarry goes in. Cllr Henderson will draft a rough basis for the Trust.

- v. **Footway by quarry:**
Cllr West is hoping to meet with Justin Collis, Whatley Quarry Manager, to discuss an alternative proposal. Mendip Ramblers has lent its support and is in communication with a resident to look at ways of improving the safety of the footway.
- vii. **Defibrillator maintenance and care:**
Cllr Asquith has purchased two new pads and a battery which should last two years unless the unit is used. The shop has agreed to check it regularly. Clerk will investigate the cost of training sessions.

Cllr Asquith left the meeting at this point.

- viii. **Play area extension:**
Part of the land in the proposal is privately owned so the plans need to be revised. The local residents and Supporters Club will need to be consulted to see if they have any objections before going any further. Once a plan is in place, the PC would need to review it before passing it The Company to assess and give final approval.
- ix. **Improvements to Vobster Cross bus shelter:**
It was agreed to add £1,500 to the budget for works to improve the area from the shelter to the road, to cut back vegetation and to allow for ongoing periodic tidying up.

09.12.20 HIGHWAY ISSUES:

- i. **Flooding by Vobster Quays:**
Highways have agreed to inspect the area.

10.12.20 PLANNING

- i. **New Applications:**
2020/2293/CLE: Application for a certificate of lawful existing development for extending development by 1m breach (2016/0049/CLP) – Glebe Cottage, Longfield – no objections.
2020/2405/HSE: Erection of a detached timber framed annexe and double garage and separate detached lob cabin summer house – The Firs (Lavender Cottage), Top Lane. Cllrs Earl and Seewoortun will arrange a site visit. The footpath behind the property has been narrowed by a barbed wire fence. To be investigated.
Rose Cottage: Cllr Barkshire enquired whether permission was required or been granted for the wall at this property as it looked out of place. Cllr Earl will ask the owner.
- ii. **Mendip decisions:**
2020/2115/TCA: Fell conifer – 1 Egypt Cottages, Top Lane – No objection
- iii. **Other planning matters:**

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE VARIOUS QUARRIES PROPOSALS

All the councillors acknowledge that the quarry plays an important part in the employment and economy of the local area but are against the 24/7 working practice and the ever increasing noise intrusion. The proposed massive expansion which is being planned will impact and change the area. Written into all the policies is that the quarries have to respect local communities and their quality of life.

There are currently two issues. The noise at Whatley quarry, especially overnight and the re-opening of the two quarries.

NOISE

- Works are being carried out all through the night and well beyond what they used to.
- Massive machinery is being used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (WHO guidance says there should be no noise above 40 decibels (the noise level of a fridge) at night as anything above this is detrimental to sleep and can give rise to mental health issues. The quarry is working above these levels at between 42-55 decibels.)

- There is a rumble during the day which was not there previously. The consistent background noise is more of an issue than the blasting. Monitoring has taken place at various residences around the parish but it is very hard to measure the ground noise. The quarry does not appear to be registering noise complaints they receive as they are not noted in their liaison meeting minutes.
- SCC need to understand that although there is no quarrying at night, the use of the crushers should also not be allowed at night.
- More quarries opening will inevitably result in further noise.

PROPOSAL TO RE-OPEN WESTDOWN QUARRY

The proposal is to re-open Bartletts and use Colemans to process the material so it does not need to be brought in from Torr. They will use the tunnel between Bartletts and Colemans which effectively means they will be quarrying and processing on one site, reducing traffic on the road between Torr and Colemans. Torr want to increase their capacity which they will be able to do if Bartletts re-opens.

PC has no problem with Bartletts opening in the future when Torr starts to run out but that should be years away as per the original planning agreement. Aggregate Industries is trying to overturn this.

Concerns:-

- Under normal circumstances an individual application is looked at in isolation. However, this cannot apply when several quarries are applying at the same time. Somerset CC (or its successor) needs to look at long term policy and therefore all the applications should be deferred until they have a new policy in place. It appears the applications are being drip fed and there is a real concern what may happen if they are assessed in isolation.
- What would be left of the local area in a hundred years if the quarrying continues at the rate it is. The right balance between the quarrying and a long term policy needs to be struck.
- Westdown application indicates that 40 new jobs will be created but with increasing mechanisation it is hard to know whether this would be long term employment. There are quite a lot of jobs already being advertised at the quarry that are not being taken up.
- Increase in the number of trains from Whatley and lorries from Westdown. A lot of the current works are being driven by Hinkley and this will increase further if they get Sizewell B which is in their sights.
- Cllr Barkshire commented that going deeper may impact on the hydrology of the area. The quarry currently pumps into the river and if that were to increase dramatically, what would that do to the river and flooding. This should be covered in an Environmental Impact Assessment.

ACTION

- Address the current and immediate issue of the noise and 24 hour working (email Whatley quarry) Cllrs Costelloe & Asquith to draft.
- Request a longer term strategic policy (email Somerset CC). Cllrs Costelloe & Asquith to draft.
- Coordinate with all the local parish councils who are affected, District and County Councillors to hold a meeting to discuss their individual issues.
- Offer support to and liaise with the two groups of residents within Mells who are addressing the same issues. Cllr Costelloe to approach.

11.12.20 CORRESPONDENCE:

Email from resident raising concerns about the quarry proposals.

12.12.20 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

i. Payment of Accounts:

Clerk’s Salary (November)	£253.25
Phone line rental	5.50

Clerk – Joy Book Cloud End, 22 Audley Avenue, Torquay TQ2 7PD
parishcouncils.frome@gmail.com Tel: 07704 584953

Utilities	<u>4.00</u>	
	£9.50	
HMRC PAYE (Period 9)		£63.40
Mells with Vobster PCC – grant for churchyard upkeep		£2,000.00
Mendip Community Transport – donation		£200.00
Defibrillator pads and battery		£110.79

ii. Receipts:

Mells Park – £1,000 annual solar array grant

iii. Barclays mandate:

Cllr Earl has experienced considerable problems trying to get through to the bank by phone to confirm his ID. He will try to make an appointment with the Frome branch to sort it which he had previously told was not possible due to COVID.

iv. Items for 2021/2022 budget:

Clerk had previously circulated a draft budget. It was agreed to add £3,000 for maintenance of the Recreation Ground, pavilion, car park and tennis courts (fence around the courts is deteriorating), £1,500 for the bus shelter. Contact will be made with the gardener who does the churchyard to enquire whether she would be interested in occasional vegetation tidying up.

Cllr Asquith returned to the meeting.

v. Preliminary precept considerations:

It was agreed that because there had been low level expenditure this year the precept would remain the same for 2021/2022 ie. £11,500. Should the change to unitary council next year effect the services the PC has to provide, increasing the precept would be considered then.

13.12.20 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

i. Clothes recycling bin in village car park: The market for selling used clothes overseas has virtually ceased so there is no outlet for the clothing that cannot be used by charities. Many clothes banks are seen overflowing due to non collection of the items. It was agreed that a clothing bank would not be installed at this time.

ii. Mud on Lime Kiln Hill: Clerk to write asking for more frequent cleaning.

14.12.20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 7.15pm which will be held remotely via Zoom at 7.30pm. Details of how to join the meeting will be available on the next agenda.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Printed name: _____