

UNCONFIRMED

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (mells-pc.gov.uk)

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 12 August 2025

- 01.08.25** **PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl – Chair, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Clare Asquith
In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk, Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Councillor
Members of the public: None
- 02.08.25** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Vince Turner
- 03.08.25** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 04.08.25** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None
- 05.08.25** **APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 8 JULY 2025**
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.08.25** **SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**
- i. **Emergency Planning Measures:** Somerset Council has [suspended normal planning services](#) for at least 12 weeks. During this period, new and straightforward applications will be prioritised. Older or more complex cases will likely face further delays, and planning enforcement will be deprioritised. Site visits will be heavily restricted, and applicants, agents, and councillors will receive standardised holding responses rather than individual updates. The crisis stems from unresolved staffing shortages, IT system integration failures, and a growing backlog.
 - ii. **£190 million Transformation Plan:** Somerset Council has approved its delayed “Inspiring Innovation” Transformation Plan, which outlines how the authority aims to save £190 million over five years. A strategic transformation partner will be sought to help develop detailed business cases and support delivery.
 - iii. **Pay Review Costs:** Somerset Council has confirmed that its pay and grading review could add up to £8 million to the annual payroll bill by 2026/27, in addition to £3 million already allocated to deliver the review itself using an outsourced partner. At Full Council, councillors questioned the cost and timing of the review given the Council’s current financial emergency.
 - iv. **New Waste Calendars and Food Recycling Push:** Somerset residents are receiving updated recycling and rubbish collection calendars which sets out collection days for the next 18 months. While Somerset has one of the highest food waste recycling rates in England, around 45% of food in household rubbish is still discarded in its packaging. The Council and contractor SUEZ will run a year-long campaign to encourage better food waste separation and promote the environmental and cost benefits of using food caddies. Residents can order free kitchen caddies and food waste bins online.
 - v. **Transport Plan Consultation Opens:** Somerset Council has launched a public consultation on its draft Local Transport Plan (LTP), which will guide transport priorities across the county for the next 20 years. The plan outlines goals to promote walking, cycling, and public transport, support the transition to electric vehicles, and improve infrastructure and road safety. It also aims to tailor policies to the needs of different community types, from small villages to large towns. You can respond to the consultation by 7 September here <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/active-travel/copy-of-local-transport-plan-2025>

07.08.25 MATTERS ARISING

- i. **Paddock lease:** With Land Registry. Unlikely to be registered until July 2026 due to the backlog.
- ii. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** Cllr Asquith to contact the Directors to arrange a meeting with the Estate.
- iii. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** No one has expressed an interest. At present the parish council is happy to proceed with 9 members instead of 11 so will not be actively looking for new councillors but would consider anyone who does express an interest.
- iv. **Fallen tree across path:** It is believed that the tree in question has now been removed but a few more have come down since. Anyone finding a tree down, can report it to the Clerk who will find out who is responsible for its removal.
- v. **Possible increase to the precept:** To be re-visited when the budget is considered later in the year.
- vi. **Future of 5 Alive:** Mells PC has put a proposal to the local parishes regarding funding for the magazine to bridge the gap of approximately £1,000/annum. Mells PC has agreed to donate £500, Whatley PC - £150 and Great Elm - £100.
- vii. **Litter bin by bus shelter:** There is limited room to place a bin directly outside the shelter so an alternative nearby location is being looked at.

09.08.25 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Speeding vehicles in Vobster:** No response from Highways regarding the length of time the survey would be valid for. Clerk to chase.
- ii. **Park Corner:** The rumble bars have not been installed yet.
- iii. **Layby by Vobster bus shelter:** Around 15 large containers have been dumped in the layby in the last couple of days. Clerk to report. Cllr West is putting together a plan for the infill of the layby which will then be submitted to Highways for approval.

10.08.25 PLANNING

- i. **New applications:**
2025/1019/HSE: Erection of single storey rear extension - Riverside Holes Lane To Top Lane Mells Frome Somerset. No objections
2025/1422/HSE: Proposed two storey side extension – The Old Police House, Longfield. No objections.
- ii. **Other planning matters:** None

11.08.25 CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. **Email from resident regarding footpath that leads to Mells River and safety of people walking down Lime Kiln Hill:** Pedestrians are at risk from the speeding traffic coming down the hill and parking on the junction causes visibility issues for those pulling out. The parish council will monitor the situation as all previous suggestions to highways to improve the situation have been rejected.

12.08.25 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds as at 12 August 2025 - £12,055.59
 Barclays as at 20 May 2025 - £13,068.50

- i. **Payment of accounts – August**

Clerk's Salary & expenses (July)	£334.88
HMRC PAYE (Period 5)	£80.40
Grist Environmental (P242511) bin emptying	£69.58
J W Waste Recycling Ltd (154373) Final bill	£62.46
Easy website monthly fees (hosting & support)	£39.60
Cloud Payroll (CS-S26-04340)	£6.00
Grant for 5 Alive magazine	£500.00
Forrester Sylvester Mackett Solicitors - balance for Barn Paddock Land Registry forms	£539.80

- ii. **Receipts:** None
- iii. **Quarterly accounts check:** The clerk presented the accounts to Cllr Brady for their quarterly check. Cllr Henderson will provide a secondary check of them.

13.08.25 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **Frome Missing Link (cycle path):** John Reckless, Buckland Dinham PC, has put together an application for a grant of up to £10k from SALC. He is seeking support from Mells PC to be co-applicants. All present were very supportive of the project and application.
- ii. **Traffic in the war memorial area:** This can be heavy during weekends/holiday periods. The passing places generally work well and the parked cars, to some degree, act as a calming measure. With the amount of traffic passing through the area, there is not much more that can be done to alleviate the situation.
- iii. **Litter bin emptying:** Somerset Council has now stopped emptying the bins and the new local contractor has taken over. Any overflowing should be reported to the Clerk or a Councillor.
- iv. **White bridge – netting:** Some areas have become damaged and have protruding sharp edges. Contractor will fix.

14.08.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Printed name: _____