

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

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

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 12 January 2026

- 01.01.26 PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl – Chair, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Steve West, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Asquith, Cllr Turner
In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk,
Members of the public: One
- 02.01.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Councillor, Cllr Claire Freeman,
- 03.01.26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 04.01.26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**
i. Resident asked for consideration to be given to introducing 20mph zones in some areas of Mells due to the high number of children walking to school, dog walkers and tourists and suggested Top Lane, near Longfield, Gay Street and Holes Lane. Cllr West mentioned that even if a limit was in place, there is a high likelihood of any form of enforcement. The PC were receptive to looking into a reduction and as an interim measure, would look at placing ‘Drive through the village carefully’ signs and speed indicator devices.
- 05.01.26 APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025**
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.01.26 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**
i. **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27 Published:** The settlement is a one-year allocation but includes illustrative funding figures for 2027/28 and 2028/29. For Somerset, Core Spending Power increases from £653.6 million in 2025/26 to £684.95 million in 2026/27. The Council’s structural budget gap now stands at £54.9 million, reduced from £101 million earlier in 2025. The remaining gap is expected to be managed through one off measures, savings, transformation activity, and council tax increases above the standard referendum threshold.
Planning Service Recovery Motion Approved: Somerset Council has approved a motion calling for improvements to the planning service following the temporary emergency measures introduced in July 2025 to address backlogs, staffing shortages, and unsustainable workloads.
Council ‘Got It Wrong’ After Cutting Over 500 Job Posts: Somerset Council’s Chief Executive has acknowledged that the authority “got it wrong” in at least three departments after more than 500 posts were cut over the past year. He told councillors that recruitment is now one of the biggest challenges facing the Council, with shortages of experienced and qualified applicants making services harder to run. He said the Council is using reserves to rebuild capacity in areas such as housing, where teams are no longer considered large enough to manage workloads.
- 07.01.26 MATTERS ARISING**
i. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** The Directors have forwarded a copy of their Heads of Terms with a proposal that the PC funds £2,500/year for an initial period of 3 years. Clerk to invite the Directors to the next meeting to discuss the terms.
ii. **Car share scheme:** Clerk to look into the legal requirements of running a scheme.

08.01.26 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Speeding vehicles in Vobster:** Traffic Management have explained the discrepancy between their quoted figures. A scheme is very unlikely to cost more than £10,000 which would be part funded by the PC and other funding streams. The PC will now put in an application for a survey to be done and pay the £500 non refundable fee. Cllrs West and Seviour to complete the application.

09.01.26 PLANNING

i. **New applications:**

2025/2288/TCA: Beech – reduce lateral limbs overhanging boundary by up to 3m, Beech – reduce height by up to 3m – The Beeches, Top Lane – for information only

2025/2262/TCA: 2 x European ash – fell. Common alder – crown reduction up to 3m and remove growth. Common alder – remove leaning stem – for information only

- ii. **Other planning matters:** None

10.01.26 CORRESPONDENCE: None

11.01.26 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds as at 1 December 2025 - £4,401.29

Barclays as at 31 December 2025 - £12,993,72

i. **Payment of accounts – January**

Clerk's Salary & expenses (December) £334.88

HMRC PAYE (Period 10) £80.40

Grist Environmental (P275756) bin emptying £34.79

Easy website monthly fees (hosting & support) £36.96

Cloud Payroll (CS-S26-11846) £6.00

Shaun Robinson – bin emptying (Inv 5) £195.00

Receipts: £38.17 – Barclays quarterly interest

- ii. **Precept setting:** Unanimously agreed to increase the precept by £10,000 from £16,500 to £26,500. It is the intention of the parish council to utilise the extra money to provide a better environment for everyone by funding installation of speed limits (if permitted by Highways) in Mells and Vobster, improving the children's play area, helping the cricket club and churches and ensuring verges are cut back on the junctions during the growing season to improve visibility.

12.01.26 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **Christmas tree for land by shop:** The Estate ran out of time to sort the logistics of providing a tree in time for Christmas but will look at providing one in the future.
- ii. **Selwood Street – road surface:** The is quite poor in places but has been patched recently.
- iii. **Defib – Vobster Inn:** Clerk to write to new owners to inform them that the defib is wired into their electricity and to confirm that this arrangement can continue.
- iv. **Whatley Quarry noise:** Cllr Earl reported that he had noticed an increase in noise around 10-11pm over the last few months. Cllr West will report this back to the liaison committee next week.

13.01.26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 10 February 2026 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Printed name: _____