

UNCONFIRMED

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

Minutes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday 8 July 2025

- 01.07.25 PRESENT:** Cllr John Earl – Chair, Cllr John Henderson – Vice Chair, Cllr Jan Seewooruttun, Cllr Alan Brady, Cllr Vince Turner, Cllr Steve West, Cllr Barry Clarke – Somerset Councillor
In Attendance: Joy Book – Clerk
Members of the public: 1
- 02.07.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Claire Freeman, Cllr David Seviour, Cllr Clare Asquith
- 03.07.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 04.07.25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**
- i. **Report from Nicki Hillman on parish footpaths:** Nicki reported that the local Rambling Association has been very supportive and helpful with keeping the paths open. Several issues have been flagged which will be dealt with in the next few weeks. The majority of paths around the parish are clear. Nicki will liaise with Cllrs Freeman and Brady to see how they can assist each other with improving the footpaths. There are several initiatives in the pipeline. ‘Slow paths’ to connect villages and towns and the ‘Don’t lose your way’ initiative tries to find lost footpaths that were in use and documented when the footpath system was originally recorded.
- 05.07.25 APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 10 JUNE 2025**
Previously circulated. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 06.07.25 SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**
- i. **Internal Audit Annual Opinion:** Somerset Council has received a “Limited Assurance” rating for the second consecutive year. Auditors remain concerned about financial sustainability, governance, and oversight of major projects.
- ii. **Somerset Council Transformation Plan:** This new plan is intended to plug a projected £101m budget gap in 2026/27, rising to £190m by 2029/30. The delivery of Phase 2 will require investment in a Strategic Transformation Partner to provide capacity and capability for change.
- iii. **Somerset Parking Proposals:** Somerset Council has confirmed that new Sunday parking charges remain scheduled for introduction this autumn. No timeline has yet been set for new on-street or free car park charges.
- iv. **Voluntary roadside working:** The PC felt that this was not a good idea due to every job requiring a licence and training which would be financially costly and time consuming.
- v. **Planning Committees:** These may not be used when deciding on smaller developments in the future. There is also the possibility that the Mayoral system would be used where the Mayor can ultimately make decisions on whether a planning application can go ahead or not.
- vi. **Boundary Review Draft Proposals Published:** The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published draft recommendations for Somerset Council’s new electoral divisions which reduces the number of Somerset councillors from 110 to 96. All current boundaries would be redrawn. The changes are expected to take effect at the May 2027 elections. www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset (consultation ends 11 August).
- 08.07.25 MATTERS ARISING**
- i. **Paddock lease:** No further information. The registration of the lease is provisionally due by 6 July 2026.

- ii. **Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground:** The tennis courts are being tarmacked week commencing 14 July. Some of the car park will be unavailable for public use whilst the works are undertaken.
- iii. **Councillor vacancies – Co-option:** No one has expressed an interest.
- iv. **Fallen tree across path:** No further information.
- v. **Possible purchase of highways land:** The areas the PC is interested in cannot be devolved by Highways.
- vi. **Possible increase to the precept:** The parish council would really like to be in a position where it can actively improve the village by supporting projects/being able to pay someone to keep the village tidy. The chair presented a rough guide to the figures involved should an increase of £10,000 be made. This would increase the parishioners contribution to around an extra £33.33/annum (64p/week).

09.07.25 HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

- i. **Speeding vehicles in Vobster:** Clerk to ask Highways how long the survey lasts and if it is for several years, the PC will push forwards to get it done so it can then work on obtaining the funds from various sources.
- ii. **Park Corner:** Some works have been carried out but the yellow hatching is still outstanding.
- iii. **Layby by Vobster bus shelter:** Cllr West will put together a proposal of how the works will be carried out for Highways

10.07.25 PLANNING

- i. **New applications:**
2025/1055/AGR: Application for prior notification of an agricultural development proposed farm track – Stoneash Farm (notification only)
- ii. **Other planning matters:** None

11.07.25 CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. **Thank you note from Vobster Inn:** The owners extended their thanks to the PC for funding the planting and truck outside the pub.

12.07.25 ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank account: Lloyds as at 8 July 2025 - £12,383.68
Barclays as at 20 May 2025 - £13,068.50

- i. **Payment of accounts – July**

Clerk's Salary & expenses (June)	£334.88
HMRC PAYE (Period 4)	£80.40
Grist Environmental (P236867) bin emptying	£34.79
Easy website monthly fees (hosting & support)	£39.60
Cloud Payroll	£6.00
Grant to Mells Sport & Recreation Ground towards	
Annual insurance	£1,483.50
Glasdon – bin for Rectory Corner	£355.49
- ii. **Receipts:** None

13.07.25 ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- i. **Whatley Brook:** This has run completely dry due to the lack of rain and a reduction in the usual amount of excess water coming from Whatley Quarry river system. As soon as the quarry was made aware they increased their output to help alleviate the issue but will not be able to maintain this into the longer term.

14.07.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 12 August 2025 at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Printed name: _____