

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
20th June 2024
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- **Cllr Mike Taylor (MT)** Axbridge Town Council
- **Nick Hoof (NH)** Resident
- **Nathan Chard (NC)** Avon & Somerset Police
- **Colin Arnold (CA)** Somerset County Council Planning
- **Sally Devlin (SD)** Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy
- **Cllr Paul Fineran (PF)** Cheddar Parish Council
- **Simon Parkes (SP) (CHAIR)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Batts Combe Quarry
Unit Manager
- **Michelle Beasley (MB)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Secretariat
- **Caroline Gould (CG)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Batts Combe Quarry
Operative
- **Alex Hemming (AH)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Senior Landscape
Architect

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- **Jim Hardcastle (JH)** Mendip Hills AONB
- **Martin Stoyles (MS)** EHO Office Sedgemoor District Council
- **James Hynes (JRH)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Estates Surveyor
- **Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR** Somerset County Council
- **Cllr Pauline Ham (PH)** Somerset County Council
- **Ruth Amundson (RA)** Somerset County Council Planning
- **Ben Ayers (BA)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Resource Manager

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

- 1. Welcome and Chair introductions – Chair Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF)**
 - **Membership Update**
 - **Review of minutes and actions from last meeting**
- 2. Batts Combe Site update – Simon Parkes (SP)**
 - **Quarry development and site update**
 - **Feedback & Complaints**
 - **Speed monitoring / Transport**
 - **Community giving**
- 3. Landscape and biodiversity update – Alex Hemmings (AH)**
- 4. Land and Mineral Planning update – Alex Hemmings (AH)**
- 5. Environmental Health update – no attendance**
- 6. Council update – Colin Arnold (CA) Mike Taylor (MT) Paul Fineran (PF)**
- 7. Local Resident update – Nick Hoof (NH)**
- 8. Police and School update – Nathan Chard (NC) Sally Devlin (SD)**
- 9. AOBs**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction

- SP welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- Membership update – SP asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of a new member, CA. He asked everyone if they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting, and if they had, were they happy for the draft to be finalised. All attendees said they were happy with the minutes from the previous meeting.
- SP went through the actions from the previous liaison meeting.
- MB to upload approved minutes from December's meeting to the Batts Combe web page. **(Complete)**
- RA to inquire about using social media to advise of planning notices in the future. **(RA confirmed it would not be possible at present)**
- SP to discuss at the next in-house community meeting the possibility of notifying residents when there will be an increase in traffic. **(SP confirmed as soon as we are aware of an increase in vehicle movements, residents will be notified via the Batts Combe Traffic Watch email address)**
- PH to get in touch with Highways to see if they can organise giving notice of road closures for emergency patching of potholes. **(No update from PH as not in attendance, SP said he would put in a plan for hauliers in the event of a road closure)**
- SP to organise speed monitoring in Hannay Road, just after the hauliers come around the corner from Warren's Hill, where speeds seem to increase. **(Complete)**
- SP to check how much of the road sweepers time is spent between the quarry and the village. **(20% of the road sweepers time is in the village)**

2. Batts Combe (Heidelberg UK) site update

Quarry development and site update

- SP said he had upgraded the inflights on the feeders and adjusted the chute on the loadout, to speed up loading lorries.
- NH asked if anything else has sped up, for example going through the wheel wash.
- SP said a few had but we encourage them to go slow.

- **CG confirmed that they are watched going through and if they go though too fast, the haulier is spoken to and reminded the next time they are on site.**
- **NH asked if this could be a focus as he had a few residents that had commented the trucks are dusty.**
- **SP said he had employed a permanent contractor to drive the tractor and bowser who is working all day every day putting water down in the quarry.**

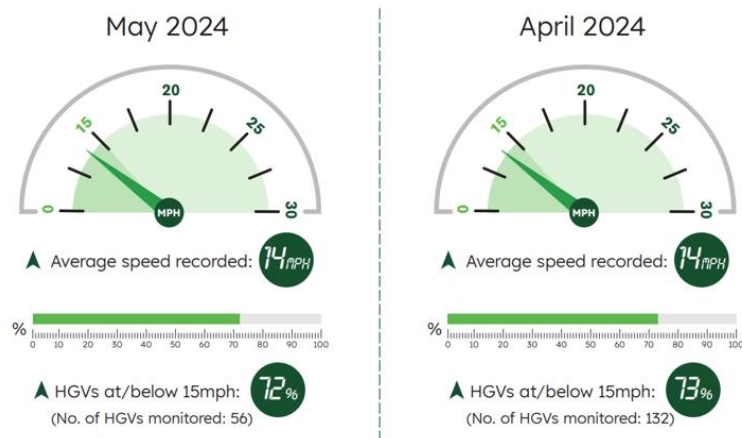
Blasting update

- **SP said he was currently blasting on levels 5, 7 and 9 and blasting has occurred 15 times this year so far.**
- **SP said he had not received any complaints regarding blasting since the last liaison meeting.**
- **SP said blast number 11 on 12th April was monitored by vibrograph at a resident's house in Warren's Hill, no issues were found.**

Speed monitoring / Transport

- **SP showed the speed data graphs to the group and apologised for lack of speed monitoring in March. He said it was due to staff shortages and having two people to man the weighbridge so inductions for new drivers can be completed.**

- No data captured in March 2024



- **NH said in the last 4 to 5 months the percentage of drivers going below 15mph is in the 70's which means 30% of drivers being caught at higher than 15mph and seems to have become a trend and not a one off. He asked what your view on driver behaviour was.**

- **SP said a large percentage of those doing higher than 15mph will be at 16/17mph.**
- **NH asked what is in place to give warnings to hauliers.**
- **SP said hauliers at 16mph he wouldn't speak to, 17-19mph first time a warning, second time a ban, anything higher than 20 get a ban. He said he will speak to the transport department to try and get some more resource to help monitor the situation.**
- **PF said he felt you would have to give 1mph leeway due to calibration.**
- **SP said perception is also different for pedestrians. 15mph can feel a lot faster due to the size of the vehicle, and drivers that creep along behind pedestrians can be intimidating.**
- **NH said the speed monitoring data shows that's the percentage of drivers over 15mph is higher than it was in 2022.**
- **SP said he needed transport to get involved to influence driver behaviour and to see the perspective of pedestrians.**
- **SP said at the next meeting, we'll show speeds 15mph and under, 16-17mph and 18mph and over.**
- **CG said she did an overview of the data, and there were 4 or 5 at 20-21 who were banned. At 18 we tell them to watch their speed, and we focus the speed monitoring on Hannay Road and Venns Gate.**
- **NH asked if we had been requested to carry out speed monitoring in Warren's Hill.**
- **CG said yes, and it's done where it's most important, where the houses are.**

Feedback and complaints

- **SP said since the last meeting he had received 4 complaints about dust, 4 complaints about un-sheeted lorries, 4 complaints received from residents about hauliers speeding, 8 complaints from residents about poor driver behaviour (4 breaking the weight restriction at Hannay Road, 1 on the phone, 2 rude/aggressive behaviour, and 1 blocking the road at the magic roundabout.**
- **SP said he had received a complaint from a haulier about an aggressive resident.**

Community giving

- **SP said so far this year we have supported the following financially, Cheddar Arts Fringe Festival, Wedmore Festival, Cheddar Ink Jam, Cheddar Flower Show, Kings of Wessex careers hub.**
- **SD said the money donated for the careers hub to buy banners, is not just for Kings of Wessex school, it goes a bit further afield in the Wessex trust. She said the banners will have information about careers and employability.**
- **SP said material donations had also been made to Cheddar Parish Council for the car park at Sharpham Road playing fields, and 145tonnes of materials to the National Trust to improve public footpaths at Black Rock in Cheddar Gorge.**



- **SP said a higher apprentice who we employed from Kings of Wessex school is starting in September.**
- **SP said he was hosting work experience in July for two Kings of Wessex students.**
- **SP said Kings of Wessex with the Earth Science centre were visiting the quarry in June and Mendip Rocks later in the year, in October.**

3. Landscape & Biodiversity update

- **AH said the goat management meeting with the National Trust and Longleat had been postponed and is now in July, where we will share the results of our drone surveys.**
- **AH said the information boards are reaching completion with final comments to feed back to the designer.**
- **AH said we are working with Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT) to help provide match funding for their Habitat management for Mendip dormice project through our forthcoming dormice management coppicing work this winter and our proposed new dormice management plan to be drawn up by specialist dormouse ecologist from Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).**
- **AH advised that a unique competition called “quarry life award” was being run by Heidelberg Materials. She said it is a scientific and education competition which takes place every three years at national and international levels. Its aim is to raise the awareness of the ecological value of extraction sites and sharing new best practices. She said it’s a fantastic opportunity for school and college students to work at a biodiversity project. More details can be found at www.quarrylifeaward.com/en**
- **NH asked if the project has to be done in a quarry.**
- **AH confirmed it did have to be a quarry and said the last quarry life award, the habitat and species award went to a team from Bath Spa University who had been assessing habitat quality parameters and sand properties at our Masters quarry in Wareham, Dorset which is a sand lizard breeding site.**

Environmental update – sustainability commitments

- **AH said 4 years ago we had targets set for our sustainability commitments, so this is an update on that. She said HMUK is encouraging its staff to use their volunteering days, trying to increase biodiversity which is extended to concrete plants, reduction in water usage, recycling, and net zero, looking at reducing CO2.**



4. Land and Mineral Planning update

- **AH said there was no update from a planning point of view since the last meeting, she said it remains we are waiting for the ROMP to be issued.**
- **CA said the notice for the ROMP should be out within a couple of weeks and he reiterated that the current planning is in place until 2042, the ROMP is just updating/modernising the conditions.**

5. Environmental Health update

- **No attendance from Environment Agency.**

6. Council update

- **MT said there was nothing from Axbridge TC or PH from Somerset CC.**
- **PF said he's receiving regular complaints about dust plumes over the quarry (photo' being sent in) and the roads being dusty.**
- **SP said he'd been in contact with Somerset Council and have provided the last six months maintenance reports of the bag house and will do the same with the dust scan results when we receive them back. He said a meeting was in the pipeline about getting dust cannons in the quarry, the tractor and bowser is out full time and we've doubled the road sweeper usage, it has been very dry.**
- **SP said the dust plumes seem to be coming from the building site in Chelmscombe quarry.**
- **SP went on to say that a part of our planning conditions is to keep our dust product in a shed, but you have to get it out of the shed, so we will look at atomising sprays for that area. He said that vapour from the asphalt plant can look like dust, and with Mendip raceway burning tyres, the smoke comes over the quarry and can also give the appearance of dust.**
- **PF asked if the issue with the wheel wash had been resolved.**
- **SP confirmed the wheel wash was fixed within 3 days due to the pump required being out of stock, but we have learned from this and will keep a spare pump in stock now. He said to help alleviate the issue we have paid to train a contractor to drive the tractor and bowser with the possibility of getting another member of staff trained.**
- **PF said there was no other complaints and he thanked SP for the donation of material for Sharpham Road playing field car park.**
- **CA said there had been a lot of changes in his department last year, 201 redundancies, RA now being part time. He said mineral and waste material now go to a strategic committee, held in the Sedgemoor office. He said this**

would be relevant for the ROMP as if objected to by the parish, then it would go to the strategic committee.

7. Local Resident update

- **NH said there still seems to be a high volume of lorries, has this increased.**
- **SP said we are seeing the same volumes as we have been since February/March time.**
- **NH asked if the dust suppression is working.**
- **SP confirmed everything is working as it should.**
- **NH asked for an update on if all lorries now have CB's as there doesn't seem to be as many reversing incidents.**
- **SP said a lot of drivers now have CB's but not 100% of them, I would say 80-90% do have them.**
- **SP said now we have no haulage fleet of our own, we removed all of the CB from our trucks before they were sold on. We have 40-50 CB's spare now and the plan is to give them to hauliers without them, with a 2 week deadline to get them fitted.**
- **CG said she found drivers are talking to each other and agreeing it is easier with a CB, so some have gone off and had them fitted of their own back.**
- **NH asked if cameras were installed to check if lorries are sheeted.**
- **SP said the camera was now in place but had not yet reviewed the footage.**
- **NH said he knew there was a lot of footage from resident's cameras of hauliers breaking quarry rules.**
- **SP said lorries coming in do not have to be sheeted, only when they are carrying material, this is another behaviour our transport department can help with.**
- **NH said he'd had a lot of feedback from residents about drivers using their mobile phone.**
- **NC said if you have footage of this, please log it with Avon and Somerset Police.**
- **NH said if we don't have footage but do have a reg number and time of incident can it still be investigated.**
- **NC said no, you must have footage of the offence you are reporting.**

- **CG said some cabs have camera's facing the driver, so if you contact the haulier direct, they can check the in-cab camera to see if the driver was using a mobile phone while driving. She said CBs are exempt and can be used while driving.**
- **NC said the offence also must be reported within two weeks of it happening and the person reporting it will be asked to give a statement. If this is refused, then it will not lead to a prosecution.**
- **NH said he's had reports from residents that the tractor drivers are a menace, being aggressive, texting and speeding.**
- **SP said most of them are banned now, but I will discuss with area ops manager as it's mainly one customer that uses them.**
- **NH said some residents have also mentioned hauliers tooting their horns at 05:30am, he asked NC if he was still patrolling early in the morning.**
- **NC said he's been told can no longer do this patrol as he must have a beat officer with him when he does patrol, he said I no longer know what the hauliers are doing at that time in the morning, I have passed it over to traffic to monitor for one month but have not had any feedback.**

8. Police and school update

Police update

- **NC said he is still carrying out speed monitoring but will now be on his own for a few weeks. Once the office is fully staffed again, speed monitoring will continue.**

Kings of Wessex update

- **SD thanked SP for providing funding for the pull up banner for the employability skills den, and for allowing students on site for their biology trip.**
- **SP said we have been praised by our recruitment team for the work Batts Combe has done with the school and managing to recruit two apprentices this year because of our relationship.**

9. AOBs

None

Summary of Actions

- **MB to upload approved minutes from March' meeting to the Batts Combe web page.**

- **SP to contact transport to get involved with influencing driver behaviour. Speeding, phone use, no sheeting.**
- **CG to change the speed graph for the next meeting to show 15mph and under, 16-17mph and 18mph and above.**
- **SP to train another tractor driver to use the tractor and bowser.**
- **SP to give out CB's to drivers without them and insist installation happens with 2 weeks.**
- **SP to review footage from the relocated camera to ensure vehicles are sheeted.**
- **SP to speak to MB about the customer who uses the nuisance tractors.**

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 12th September 2024

Thursday 12th December 2024

Thursday 13th March 2025

Thursday 12th June 2025

[ENDS]