

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
12th September 2024
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- **Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR** Somerset County Council
- **Cllr Pauline Ham (PH)** Somerset County Council
- **Cllr Mike Taylor (MT)** Axbridge Town Council
- **Nick Hoof (NH)** Resident
- **Ruth Amundson (RA)** Somerset County Council Planning
- **Sally Devlin (SD)** Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy
- **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
- **Ben Ayers (BA)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Resource Manager

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- **Jim Hardcastle (JH)** Mendip Hills AONB
- **Martin Stoyles (MS)** EHO Office Sedgemoor District Council
- **Nathan Chard (NC)** Avon & Somerset Police
- **Cllr Paul Fineran (PF)** Cheddar Parish Council
- **James Hynes (JRH)** Heidelberg Materials UK, Land & Mineral
Estates Surveyor

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 – Ben Ayres (BA)**
- 5. Environmental Health update – no attendance**
- 6. Council update – Ruth Amundson (RA) Mike Taylor (MT) Pauline Ham (PH)**
- 7. Local Resident update – Nick Hoof (NH)**
- 8. Police and School update – Sally Devlin (SD) (no attendance from police)**
- 9. AOBs**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction.

- **BF welcomed attendees to the meeting.**
- **Membership update – BF asked everyone to introduce themselves. 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.**
- **BF went through the actions from the previous liaison meeting.**
- **MB to upload approved minutes from March' meeting to the Batts Combe web page. (Complete)**
- **SP to contact transport to get involved with influencing driver behaviour. Speeding, phone use, no sheeting. (Complete)**
- **CG to change speed graph for the next meeting to show 15mph and under, 16-17mph and 18mph and above. (Complete)**
- **SP to train another tractor driver to use the tractor and bowser. (Complete)**
- **SP to give out spare CB's to drivers without them and insist on installation of such within 2 weeks. (Complete)**
- **SP to review footage from the relocated camera to ensure vehicles are sheeted. (Complete)**
- **SP to speak to MB about the customer that uses the tractors that are considered a nuisance. (Complete)**

2. Batts Combe (Heidelberg UK) site update

Quarry development and site update

- **SP said we are continuing to develop level 4 (southeast corner).**

Blasting update

- **SP said he was currently blasting on levels 4, 5, 7 and 9 and blasting has occurred 25 times this year so far.**
- **SP said he had received one complaint since the last meeting.**

- SP said as you can see from the blasting table, the PPV on the last blast was recorded at 2.85mm/s, which is highest we have seen this year, but well within the permitted planning of 9mm/s.
- NH asked what you would expect to feel.
- SP said generally its “air over pressure” (AOP) that’s felt in the house. He said there are many things that can affect what is felt, like the weather, the temperature, where we are blasting, rainfall. This blast was called a box cut, normally we would fire into an open space but this one the space was a bit more confined.
- SP said if anyone was concerned about the vibration, we can put a vibrograph at their property to collect the data.

Date	Shot No	PPV Record	Scaled Distance	Air Over Pressure	MIC	mic*0.5	Quarry Lev	Easting of Shot	Northing of Shot	Elevation	Location of Vibrograph	gr vib E	gr vib N	distance to vibrograph (m)	Kg of explosive used	Blast Rft	Number of holes	Number of charges	Tonnes yield of st	Yield per hole	Burden & Spacing	Total cost per shot	Cost per tonne
17 January 2024	R01-24	1.2	64.5	108	137	11.7	8	348396	155164	120	Unit office	345867	154570	755	5761	7.37	57	61	42459	832.53	4.5 X 4.5		
08 February 2024	R02-24	2.2	51.1	108	140	11.8	4	348316	154975	176	Unit office	345867	154570	605	5553	6.81	70	65	37808	581.66	4.0 X 4.0		
09 February 2024	R03-24	1.57	58.3	108	152	12.3	7	348325	155124	134	Unit office	345867	154570	719	4210	6.28	35	33	25438	801.15	4.5 X 4.5		
15 February 2024	R04-24	1.52	44.0	109	139	11.8	5	348146	155007	162	Unit office	345867	154570	518	1943	5.62	19	19	10911	574.26	4.5 X 4.5		
15 February 2024	R05-24	1.95	50.8	109	157	12.5	5	348232	155091	149	Unit office	345867	154570	636	5422	5.59	43	37	32467	877.49	4.5 X 4.5		
01 March 2024	R06-24	1.85	66.1	110	138	11.7	9	348287	155223	106	Unit office	345867	154570	776	8432	6.39	81	75	53877	718.36	4.5 X 4.5		
06 March 2024	R07-24	2	87.7	110	155	12.4	8	348325	155123	134	Unit office	345867	154570	718	4000	7.27	40	37	29070	785.68	4.5 X 4.5		
19 March 2024	R08-24	1.27	53.5	108	165	12.8	8	348340	155069	148	Unit office	345867	154570	688	8945	6.66	74	68	59549	875.72	4.5 X 4.5		
28 March 2024	R09-24	1.17	60.6	108	100	10.0	4	348399	154985	175	Unit office	345867	154570	606	1420	3.40	31	30	4829	160.97	4.5 X 4.5		
05 April 2024	R10-24	1.52	53.6	108	164	12.8	6	348233	155150	149	Unit office	345867	154570	686	5266	6.05	38	38	31877	838.87	4.5 X 4.5		
12 April 2024	R11-24	1.47	60.2	100	152	12.3	8	348303	155170	119	Resident Request	345867	154570	742	6116	6.23	65	63	38120	719.25	4.5 X 4.5		
14 May 2024	R12-24	2.3	51.7	111	152	12.3	5	348310	155029	163	Unit office	345867	154570	638	3712	6.19	34	33	22977	666.27	4.0 X 4.0		
20 May 2024	R13-24	2.3	46.7	111	168	13.0	5	348223	155060	149	Unit office	345867	154570	606	5495	5.65	43	42	38726	874.43	4.0 X 4.0		
03 June 2024	R14-24	1.78	56.0	111	156	12.5	7	348313	155109	135	Unit office	345867	154570	700	13800	6.51	101	95	90447	952.07	4.5 X 4.5		
11 June 2024	R15-24	1.18	55.3	111	144	12.0	5	348350	155015	163	Unit office	345867	154570	664	4729	6.81	47	40	31277	781.93	4.0 X 4.0		
27 June 2024	R16-24	1.50	67.3	108	126	11.2	9	348279	155203	107	Unit office	345867	154570	755	5516	6.39	48	46	35255	766.41	4.5 X 4.5		
09 July 2024	R17-24	0.58	73.7	108	98	7.1	4	348297	154946	170	Unit office	345867	154570	571	1506	7.46	52	47	11234	239.02	4.0 X 4.0		
09 July 2024	R18-24	0.58	82.7	108	65	7.4	4	348262	155039	157	Unit office	345867	154570	613	389	8.93	11	11	3475	315.91	4.0 X 4.0		
11 July 2024	R19-24	0.58	54.8	108	185	13.6	7	348355	155133	135	Unit office	345867	154570	745	2424	8.95	30	26	21890	834.23	4.0 X 4.0		
18 July 2024	R20-24	1.45	74.6	109	137	11.7	6	348348	155298	121	Unit office	345867	154570	873	7128	6.10	61	54	43500	805.56	4.0 X 4.0		
25 July 2024	R21-24	1.55	52.2	108	187	12.9	5	348334	155055	147	Unit office	345867	154570	674	5871	5.52	70	70	54690	778.00	4.0 X 4.5		
08 August 2024	R22-24	1.80	63.4	108	126	11.2	8	348257	155165	119	Unit office	345867	154570	711	5532	6.48	54	53	35888	676.75	4.0 X 4.5		
14 August 2024	R23-24	0.60	112.3	109	20	4.5	5	348147	154987	151	Unit office	345867	154570	502	406	13.51	71	47	5487	116.74	3.5 X 3.5		
27 August 2024	R24-24	1.35	61.9	107	140	11.8	8	348336	155157	119	Unit office	345867	154570	733	4028	5.77	32	32	23245	728.41	4.0 X 4.5		
29 August 2024	R25-24	2.85	52.8	110	152	12.3	7	348241	155103	134	Unit office	345867	154570	651	7286	5.60	49	47	40785	867.77	4.0 X 4.5		
18 September 2024	R26-24										Unit office	345867	154570										

- SP said if anyone is interested, we could get the blasting company to attend a liaison meeting to explain the process.
- NH said don't you think 9mm/s is too high.
- BA said this is why there is a ROMP review every 15 years, to review permissions.
- AH said maybe NH can ask the residents if they would be interested in more information on blasting.

Speed monitoring / Transport

- SP showed the speed data graphs to the group and apologised for lack of speed monitoring in June. 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



July

Of 155 movements monitored:

- 10 hauliers: 16-17mph
- 11 hauliers were 18-20

August

Of 69 movements monitored:

- 10 hauliers: 16-17mph
- 3 hauliers: 18-20mph

- **SP said at the previous meeting, 30% were over 15mph, its now reduced to approximately 13% that are over 15mph.**
- **SP said those that were caught over 18mph have been dealt with in line with HMUK protocol.**
- **SP said Batts Combe staff will continue to speed monitor and that he had also asked Avon & Somerset Constabulary if they can carry out speed monitoring in the area.**
- **BF said if you don't hear back from the police, the council can get involved.**
- **NH asked if the Police and Crime Commissioner is approachable.**
- **BF said yes, the focus for them is on Bristol, but if we have evidence they will be involved.**
- **BF asked SP if the speed monitoring and data was captured by HMUK.**
- **SP said yes, this is quarry staff speed monitoring and collecting the data.**

- PH said please can she make a plea about the stop signs coming off the Axbridge bypass, for people to stop. The speed at which people approach them and then do not stop is dangerous and residents are concerned.
- SP said it seems the problem is not just us, but also other quarries in the area and general road users.
- NH asked if residents could use the speed monitoring equipment or is it just HMUK staff.
- SP said he would look into the possibility of non-HMUK people using the equipment.
- NH said is there someone I can speak to, to organise a resident's speed watch group.
- PH said to organise an official speed watch group you have to liaise with the police. She said if you just approach them and tell them you would like to form a speed watch group.

Feedback and complaints

- SP showed the group a list of complaints received since the last meeting.

Complaints received 20th June – 6th September 2024

30 Complaints received in total to the Batts Combe email address.

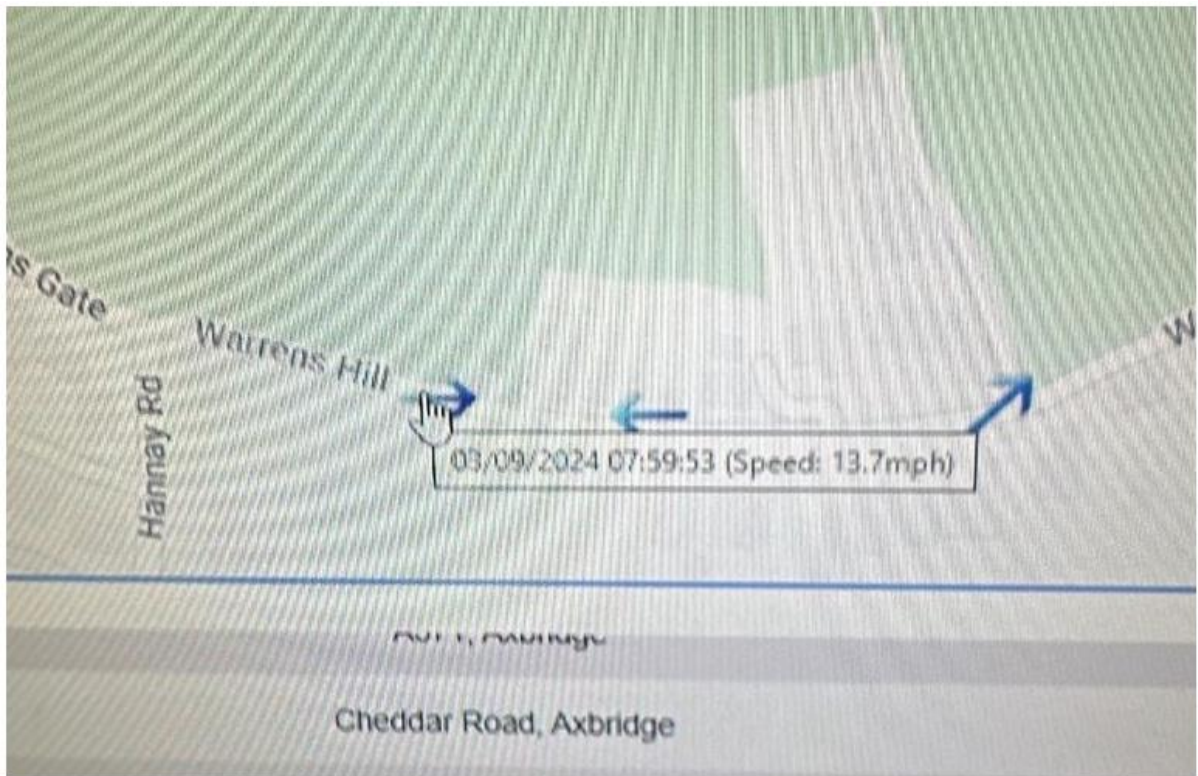
- Dust x 1
- Speeding x 6
- Blasting x 1
- Haulier using mobile phone while driving x 6
- Spilled material x 4
- Unsheeted x 1
- Noise (siren) x 1
- Damage to property by haulier x 1
- Damage to bollards caused by reversing x 2
- Haulier reports of residents being provocative x 1
- Haulier reports of pallet creating a hazard in the road x 1
- CB interference x 10
- State of road (potholes) x 1
- Tyre being changed in road x 1
- Queuing/waiting on Venns Gate before 6am x 2

All complaints to be sent to battscombequarry@uk.heidelbergmaterials.com to ensure they are logged and investigated. Texts and emails to personal mobile phones and email addresses may not get actioned or logged.

- SP said someone had been interfering with CB channels, which is stopping hauliers communicating. He said it is illegal to interfere with CB channels and if it continues, we can employ a specialist to pinpoint the location of the interference.

- SP said he was disappointed that NC had been stopped from patrolling the garage area early in the morning, dealing with queuing lorries.
- SP said he had met with the haulier who uses tractors, and they were put on stop until they had confirmed all staff using Batts Combe had been made aware of complaints received regarding speeding and using mobile phones.
- SP said most drivers now have CB radio's and the weighbridge manage those one's without by ensuring they leave with a driver that does have one.
- SP said sheeting spot checks are now in place and the following example message is sent to the hauliers found breaking protocol. "***** was observed un-sheeting on Warrens Hill this morning. HM policy is not to un-sheet until they reach the quarry premises. We have these restrictions in place to ensure Compliance with our planning Conditions and positive relations with our residents in the community and to mitigate any hazards to other road users".
- SP said there will be no formal ban for drivers without evidence, but we do continue regular conversations with drivers.
- SP said a request has been made to Avon and Somerset Police to have more presence in the are to keep an eye on drivers using a mobile phone while driving.
- SP said that in the main, reversing is caused by cars parked on Warrens Hill, which is wide enough for HGVs to pass side by side. He added that installing double yellow lines could be a way of alleviating the issue. But approval from Somerset Council would be required.
- SD said the resident parked cars are an issue, even coming here this evening was tricky coming up with oncoming traffic.
- AH agreed that recently it had got worse.
- PH said to request yellow lines, you would have to go to Highways and get a traffic order and may also have to liaise with Cheddar Parish Council.
- NH asked when the sheeting related spot checks started.
- SP advised that this was a recent step and that the information gathered was now under review.
- NH pointed out that, having reviewed some of the residents' pictures, it appeared that some sheets didn't seem adequate.
- SP set out that the site team is now having a monthly meeting with the transport department, and he will have NH's query about sheeting efficacy added to the agenda.

- **SP showed an example of the information that is now retrievable from modern tachographs and tracking systems installed in many HGV's that aid the company when carrying out HGV-related investigations.**



Community giving

- **SP said the donation of material to the National Trust to improve public foot paths at Black Rock in Cheddar Gorge is still on going. (Before on after photos below.**





- **SP said a higher apprentice was starting from Kings of Wessex school.**
 - **SP said in June we hosted students from Kings of Wessex school and the Earth Science Centre.**
 - **SP said in the coming months we will be hosting Mendip Rocks quarry tours and Axbridge First School visit, with AH and BF visiting the children in their class in the afternoon.**
- 3. Landscape & Biodiversity update**
- **AH said the goat management meeting with NT and Longleat had taken place, and the results of the drone surveys shared. HM have more goats and sheep within the landholding than expected and a stalker is being engaged to reduce numbers to prevent damage to restoration planting, woodland biodiversity and quarry products. She said NT and Longleat are continuing to monitor their populations with the aim of maintaining healthy populations to help control the scrub within the grassland habitats in The Gorge. All stakeholders are committed to working together and sharing information.**
 - **AH said the information boards for the Perch are nearing completion, with final drafts completed and a quote received for production.**
 - **AH said an update to our hazardous tree survey is underway, with felling taking place this winter under ecological supervision as required.**
 - **AH said day to day landscape work to repair fences on the The Perch and strimming of Warrens Hill footpath were ongoing.**
 - **AH explained to the group about Heidelberg Materials “Quarry Life Award”.**

- MB said we have approached Fairlands Middle School in Cheddar to see if they would like to be involved but have not had a reply.
- PH said she would find out who to email at Fairlands.
- AH said the deadline to apply is 18th November 2024.

Environmental update – sustainability commitments



4. Land and Mineral Planning update

- **BA said we are still waiting on notices for the periodic review, and the last monitoring review was in March.**
- **NH asked if there should be more frequency in visits if the last one was 6 months ago.**
- **RA said yes, but there is a staff shortage in Somerset Council's (SC) department at present.**
- **NH asked if it was a legal requirement.**
- **RA said its not a legal requirement, but good practice. A site that is deemed to be high risk in not abiding by their planning permissions for instance, would be visited more frequently than the ones that comply. Our understanding is that Batts Combe is not considered by SC to be high risk.**
- **BA said in the past some sites may get two or three visits and some only one per year. Depending on the council. The quarry pays for the visit, so it's down to getting the people at the local authority level that is the issue.**
- **PH said SC are incredibly short staffed, some people having over a thousand cases to deal with.**
- **NH asked if it's just one person that covers complaints.**
- **PH said there are generally one or two people in the planning department that cover complaints.**
- **RA said the enforcement office deal with travellers and site monitoring, but they are stretched at present.**
- **NH asked if the issue of being understaffed was national.**
- **RA said yes and there is a general shortage of planners, and even less with knowledge of minerals and ROMP reviews. She said SC is looking at a management company to help. They will have a fresh eye and start gathering data and then come up with a solution. She added that SC is also looking at apprentices to train in minerals and waste, these courses will be at the University of the West of England (UWE).**
- **BA said it's not unusual to get one visit. He said mothballed sites should get two visits even though there is nothing to see.**
- **RA said it all depends on the results of the last visit, if the quarry is good and complying with planning conditions, the visits will be less frequent.**

5. Environmental Health update

- **SP said 28th August saw a regulatory visit to review part B of the permit controls by SC's Environmental Health Officer, of which all was found to be in order.**
- **SP said one complaint had been received about an early morning siren.**
- **SP said on 10th July the site had received an unannounced visit from the HSE reviewing geotechnical appraisals and blasting operations. He said no issues were found.**
- **SP said the EA received a complaint of dust from a resident on 4th July.**

6. Council update

- **MT said the main concern from Axbridge TC are the stop signs on the slip road from the bypass, is there anyway to put pressure on highways to help with a solution.**
- **BF said we could write to them.**
- **NH said highways had repaired a pothole at the bottom of Warrens Hill, the area had been sprayed with white paint, but it seems there was not enough asphalt to fill the hole and it's been left.**
- **PH said the quickest way to get road repairs completed is to report them on-line.**
- **NH said the resident has reported it on-line, but because in their eyes it's been repaired, it keeps getting closed unresolved. What is the issue in getting the repairs done properly, and not just filling in holes.**
- **PH said there are lots of issues with the roads, and the roads around the quarry are no different from any other road in the area, she said it's a big task for Highways, but they will get around to them.**
- **NH said the roads around here are disintegrating, they need to be dug up and relayed properly.**
- **PH said we have a council meeting next week and Highways hold a surgery, so we'll try and talk to them.**

7. Local Resident update

- **NH said the lack of sheeting covering loads is resulting in stone and dust being spilt.**
- **SP said he would review data captured while monitoring as mentioned earlier.**

- **NH said the tractor drivers' behaviour of speeding and using mobile phones while driving is constant.**
- **SP said he had placed a temporary ban and had a meeting with the owner of the haulage company, where he laid down our expectations. When the ban is lifted, we'll monitor performance going forward.**
- **NH asked if the flashing speed sign was going to be moved.**
- **SP said yes, it's being moved to Rock House.**
- **NH said there is a large pothole by the camera.**
- **BF said to report to Highways.**
- **NH said he'd been told there would be no more deliveries to Bridgwater but had not seen a decrease in lorries.**
- **SP said there is a lot of work out there and we do have other customers.**
- **NH said there was flooding and what looks like silt coming from the drain.**
- **SP said we do not discharge water from site.**
- **BF said flooding should be reported to Highways and the parish council.**
- **NH it looks like a blockage in the ditch is causing it.**
- **PH said to NH to send her a photo of it, and she would speak with Highways.**
- **NH said is there a plan in place if the road closed for repairs.**
- **SP said we'd close.**
- **NH asked if there was an update on the ROMP.**
- **RA said it's not been served yet, she said there was some work to do and hoped it would be served in the coming weeks.**
- **NH said so it's imminent.**
- **RA said I wouldn't say imminent, but it is close.**
- **NH asked if it's made public when the notice is served.**
- **RA said the notice itself is just informing Heidelberg Materials UK. When the plan is being submitted, it will then be made public.**

- BA said before we submit a scheme under the ROMP review process, we will have community consultation events to show the plans.
- AH said we are working with our PR company to come up with a leaflet to explain what a ROMP is and what it does. It's not about expanding the quarry, but just updating the planning conditions.
- RA said she was happy to continue to update the liaison group with progress on the ROMP review process.

8. Police and school update

Police update

- No attendance

Kings of Wessex update

- None

9. AOBs

- PH said she would be looking for volunteers and possibly machinery to clear overgrown allotments for Axbridge Town Council.
- MB said she would send PH the link to HMUK community to make the request. Also here [Request a donation from Batts Combe quarry | Heidelberg Materials UK](#)
- SP shared a picture of Chelmscombe Quarry with smoke and dust cloud above it. He said there is a lot of building work happening in the surrounding area that's causing dust. He said we have dust monitors around different points in Cheddar, which is monitored regularly, and I'd be happy to share this data at the liaison meetings.

Summary of Actions

- MB to upload approved minutes from June' meeting to the Batts Combe web page.
- MB to upload draft minutes from this meeting to the Batts Combe web page.
- SP to invite blast specialist to next meeting.
- NH to ask residents if they would like more info on blasting.
- SP to check if residents can use Batts Combe's speed gun.
- SP to review sheeting data.
- SP to add "adequate sheeting" to the agenda at the next transport meeting.
- PH to advise who to email at Fairlands Middle School about QLA.
- PH to speak to Highways at the next council meeting about road repairs/resurfacing.
- NH to send PH a photo of the blocked ditch causing flooding.
- MB to send PH link to community giving page.
- SP to include dust monitoring data in the agenda for the next meeting.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 12th December 2024

Thursday 13th March 2025

Thursday 12th June 2025

Thursday 11th September 2025

[ENDS]