

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
9th June 2022
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

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| • Mike Brown (MB) | Hanson Aggregates, Southwest Area Operations Manager |
| • Simon Parkes (SP) | Hanson Aggregates, Batts Combe Quarry Unit Manager |
| • Michelle Beasley (MMB) | Hanson Aggregates, Secretariat |
| • Ben Ayes (BA) | Hanson Aggregates, Land & Mineral Resource Manager |
| • Alex Hemming (AH) | Hanson Aggregates, Senior Landscape Architect |
| • Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) | Axbridge Town Council |
| • Cllr Barry Carter (BC) | Cheddar Parish Council |
| • Nicola Haynes (NH) | Resident |
| • Sally Devlin (SD) | Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy |

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| • Graham Godwin-Pearson (GP) | Sedgemoor District Council |
| • Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) | Somerset County Council |
| • Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) | Somerset County Council |
| • Steve Hemmett (SH) | Avon & Somerset Police |
| • Nicola Gardiner (NG) | Senior Pollution EHO Office, Sedgemoor DC |
| • Jim Hardcastle (JH) | Mendip Hills AONB |
| • Andrew Gunn (AG) | Somerset County Council Planning |
| • Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) | Cheddar Parish Council |

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. **Introduction** – Chair Mike Brown (MB)
 - Welcome and Chair introductions
 - Review of minutes and action review from last meeting
 - Membership Update

2. **Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update** – Simon Parkes (SP), Unit Manager Batts Combe quarry, Hanson UK
 - Feedback & Complaints

3. **Landscape and biodiversity update** – Alex Hemmings (AH), Hanson Senior Landscape Architect

4. **Land and Mineral Planning update** – Ben Ayres (BA), Hanson Land & Mineral Resource Manager

5. **Hanson Transport update** - Simon Parkes (SP), Unit Manager Batts Combe quarry, Hanson UK

6. **Environmental Health update** - Alex Hemmings (AH), Hanson Senior Landscape Architect

7. **District Council update** – No Attendance from District Council

8. **Local Resident update** – Nicola Hayes (NH) Local Resident

9. **Parish Council update** – Cllr Mike Taylor – Axbridge Town & Cllr Barry Carter – Cheddar Parish

10. **AOBs**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Chair's introduction

Welcome:

- MB welcomed attendees to the meeting
- MB advised this meeting had been running for many years, the longest serving members being Alex Hemmings (AH) and Nicola Hayes (NH) MB advised that he was looking to refresh the committee.
- MB chaired this meeting, but advised the meeting was for the community and would like to see for future meetings a volunteer from one of the community attendees to take on the role.

Review of previous minutes:

- MB advised on Environment Agency (EA) activity. EA visited Batts Combe 16/09/21 and found it to be in breach of EA permit part A water emissions. The water spray, which is used for dust suppression was missing the cattle grid near the far side exit gate and was spraying the wrong side, leaving water running in the road. This was removed and the EA deemed site were no longer in breach.
- SP advised that a variation on the existing EA permit dated 2003 had been applied for. The variation incorporates several changes associated with removal of the lime kiln operation. Sedgemoor district council to visit on 14th June 2022 to inspect the site and issue the draft permit.

Membership Update

- MB Advised that NG could not attend but had sent an email. Her office had not received any complaints since AUG 21 which was discussed at the last meeting.
- AG had emailed to advise he was no longer the correct person in the planning department who is dealing with Batts Combe, he has passed details to Ruth Amundson who is dealing directly with BA and will be invited to the next meeting.
- SH could not attend on this occasion but would like to be actively involved in the future.

2. Batts Combe (Hanson Site) Update

- SP showed an arial view photo of the quarry and advised of the devolvement work being carried out in the mid tip and south-eastern corner. SP advised that the area known as “Mid Tip” (see pic) which is 165m above sea level is the next section to be extracted. This would mean the quarry will be more visible from a distance to people who commute to Wedmore, Compton Bishop, Wells etc. The timescale for this is between 6-9 months. The area that will become exposed has already been the focus of restoration work with tree planting designed to reduce the visibility of the site.



- SP advised that the volume in tonnage the site is producing has reduced year on year with the exception for 2019 when Hinckley Point started construction.

Year	Tonnage
2017	965,000
2018	875,000
2019	1,100,000
2020	940,000
2021	860,000
2022	340,000 to date on target for 816,000

- SP advised of the community web page, where the minutes to this meeting will be published in draft form and then verified and agreed at the next meeting. The page is currently under devolvement and will also have a Newsletter in July, information on blasting, HGV Speed monitoring report, Biodiversity Action Plan and general information. www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/sites/batts-combe-quarry/documents
- SP advised that Hanson allow staff to take a day's paid leave to carry out volunteer work. Batts Combe has 23 staff and would like to find something

local to support. In the past we have filled potholes in the road local to the site and the Batts Combe team are open to suggestions.

- Feedback & Complaints – MB advised this section does not include the complaints with the road as that will be covered in the “Hanson Transport Update”. NG confirmed by email that the Environmental Health team at Sedgemoor District Council had not received any formal complaints since this time last year. One was for dust, and the other a rude haulier. Moving forward Hanson will keep a register of formal complaints at Batts Combe with clear actions.
- SP advised that Hanson has updated the stack monitoring at Batts Combe, spending £26k to install monitoring to modernise processes and ensure compliance with the new EA Permit.

3. Landscape & Biodiversity Update

- AH Advised that the quarry sits within important habitats and as a part of the restoration we would be restoring the quarry faces to woodland and calcareous grassland, providing habitat for species such as dormice and bats. The benches are currently being developed, with grass seeding and tree planting. The back faces are being impacted by the widening of the road on site, so hydroseeding will be organised for the autumn.
- AH advise that we also own “The Perch” which is SSSI (site of special scientific interest). AH pointed out the area on the map. Ash die back trees are posing a threat to rights of way users and thus they are being felled in a sensitive manner, working closely with a company called “First Ecology”. We are not closing foot paths or impacting the use of the landscape. We carry out regular surveys and we only fell the tree if it causes a threat. Batts Combe have spent £75k so far this year on felling trees. The disease in Ash trees has affected the Mendips badly due to the amount of Ash here.
- AH advised there will be a Roboflale scrub clearance at “The Perch” later in the year. Natural England, Botanists and Reptile specialists will be involved. There will be info boards and viewpoints in the hope it will discourage antisocial behaviour and drug use in the area. Please report to Steve Hemmett or call 101. MB requested SP to contact SH.
- AH advised some pallets and fencing had been erected on “The Perch” which is against SSSI rules and had to be taken down. This caused great upset on local social media.
- AH advised that the goats were causing an issue. Local farmers are not happy as there have been cross breeding and over grazing issues. Batts Combe are liaising with a goat and sheep group and working with the National Trust in forming a management plan. Batts Combe have spent £140k on goat fencing to keep them out of the quarry, as they destroy all the restoration being implemented, by eating the newly planted trees.
- The site biodiversity action plan is due to be updated this year.
- Dormice monitoring is ongoing on The Perch and in the woodlands to the east of the quarry with local volunteers.

4. Land and Mineral Planning Update

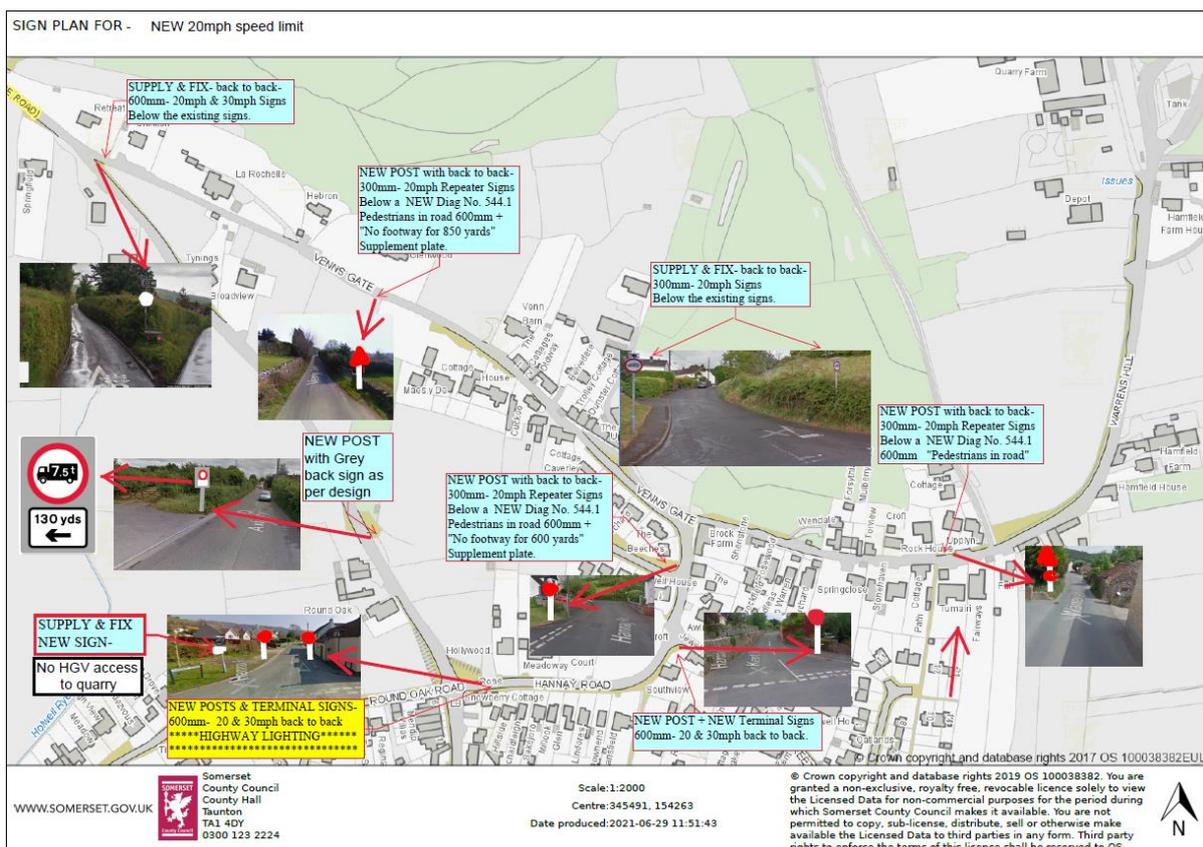
- BA advised that planning permission ref 1/17/98/038 , has 46 conditions which detail the operating hours, dust ,noise and blasting conditions that Hanson have to comply with, the end date of the permission is 21st February 2042.
- Under the ROMP process the conditions can be reviewed by Planning Dept of Somerset County Council (SCC) every 15 years. It is the responsibility of the SCC to serve notice to review the operating conditions attached to any planning permission.
- AG has passed details to Ruth Amundson at SCC to organise a site meeting with Hanson as the Planning dept at SCC weren't able to attend this quarry liaison meeting.
- NH asked if the planners listened to local residents concerns. BA advised when Hanson submit any planning application or a new scheme of conditions under a ROMP submission, it is sent out by the Council to different statutory & non statutory bodies and have regard to national planning policy guidance before a decision is made.
- MB & BA advised that they understood from other sites in the County that Somerset Planning Dept have been under resourced and have outsourced some minerals sites planning case work to other authorities' officers to act on their behalf in monitoring mineral sites and dealing with planning applications.

5. Hanson Transport Update

- MB advised that there is an agreed route for the hauliers between Venns Gate, Warrens Hill, and Hannay Road. There are occasions when the agreed route was not used. e.g when Venns Gate was closed, police directed the traffic into Hannay Road and drivers new to the area using sat nav.
- Local resident Andrew Sinclair had been in contact with site to advise the weight restriction sign at Hannay Road junction with Axbridge Road could not be seen by the hauliers
- MB advised that Hanson volunteered to consult with Highways to make changes to the signage in the roads around Batts Combe, for clearer instruction to hauliers. Speed signs for 20MPH will also be implemented. (See photo supplied by Highways) MB advised the work has been agreed by Highways and will be carried out by Hanson Contracting at our own cost. Hanson Contracting have applied for a section 171 which is currently with Highways waiting approval. Once approval is granted, work will be scheduled over a weekend when it would cause less disruption than if carried out in a working week.
- MB advised that the guidance to HGV drivers would still be 15MPH even though the signage will change to 20MPH. Hanson will continue to monitor drivers at 15MPH. The 15MPH signs will be removed.

- MB advised that the road condition and potholes are the responsibility of Highways. SCC has made some repairs and Hanson is in regular contact with Highways about the issue but have been advised it's very low priority for them.
- MB advise that once the road signage is complete, it is likely Hanson will fund other measures, possibly a footpath at part of Venns Gate.
- SP advised that the matter would not be straight forward as liaison with Highways on future maintenance and inclusion within highways "ownership" would have to occur and this would require a legal agreement. A solicitor has been employed to look at the possibility of the pathway.
- MB advised we would like to work together with the residents and property owners.
- MB advised changing the access route to Batts Combe Quarry had a full review in the 1990's. A preferred alternative route could not be agreed by the Council and residents with natural habitats, and the effects on other residents and highways being the core reasons. There is no obvious solution with further housing development and further ecological restrictions limiting even those 1990's alternatives.

Plan for new road signs ...



- NH advised that the hauliers are still speeding although Karen had stopped taking video as the evidence was not being used. SP added the Police could not use the video as there is no way of knowing the speed without a speed camera. As the vehicles are so big, the perception is that it's going faster than it is. NH advised it didn't seem to be the

Hanson trucks that were speeding. NH also felt that staff leaving the quarry at 5pm were going too fast.

- NH asked what the Hanson procedure for new drivers coming to site is. SP advised all new drivers get a full induction, but only after they have already arrived at the quarry. Hanson drivers are fully inducted before attending site. He acknowledged that there is less control over trucks being driven by temporary staff and customers who organise their own transport to collect material. (Known as Collects)
- NH advised that trucks are arriving before 6am and asked if we could put a note on our website asking them not to arrive before 6am as no access to site. SP advised this is something we can implement.
- MB advised that should Venns Gate be closed for a period more than 30 minutes we would work on an alternative route/plan. This could include for example finding a parking area nearby so that trucks can wait without causing disruption on the roads.
- NH provided a photo of a truck where the reg number couldn't be seen, but the tailboard was loose and left a mess in the road. NH advised that this was not reported as the registration number could not be seen. The residents feel without the reg number they can't prove it. SP advised if anything like this happened in the future, they should get in touch because we could have sent out the road sweeper to clean up.

6. Environmental Health Update

- None currently

7. District Council update

- No attendance from District Council

8. Local resident update

- SP advised that Esther has asked for the bridal path to be strimmed.
- MT asked where the traffic goes when it leaves the quarry. SP & MB explained the main routes being A38 / M5 in both directions.
- MT put an idea forward about approaching the owners of the old Yeo Valley site to use for a temporary lorry park, MMB also put an idea forward to approach Cheddar Car boot & Market (Winchester Farm, Cheddar) for temporary parking should Venns Gate ever close.
- NH advised there was some positive feedback from one resident who said they thought the drivers seemed to be behaving more respectfully recently, but still too fast.

9. Parish Council update

- BC enquired if an open day was possible, and arranging a parish and town council quarry tour. BC thought this would be well received seeing as we now have 4 new councillors. MB/SP advised an open day was in the pipeline for next year, and to get in touch and let us know how many would like to have a quarry tour as this is something that can be organised very quickly.

10. AOBs

- SD thanked Hanson for donation of the employability hub at Kings of Wessex Academy and that it was in use daily. She felt the visits from staff were beneficial and would like to see more. SD asked if it would be a possibility to carry out mock interviews to get students some experience in being interviewed. SP replied it was something he could do where the student came to the office and be put through the interview process.
- SP advised of the apprenticeship scheme and the opportunities it can open to young people and success stories of Hanson Apprentices so far.
- SD advised she would like to see our staff help with the community garden at Kings of Wessex school on their volunteering day.
- MB asked for feedback on future topics for the agenda. e.g. Inclusion & Diversity Video, Social Policy, Carbon, Education, Volunteering. MB agreed with the attendees that the meeting should run quarterly, and the time should be 5pm.
- NH requested a copy of the Hauliers rules that SP showed during the meeting, and the map of where the road signs are going to be added to the community page along with the minutes.
- MB to arrange a team's call with transport managers and hauliers.

Summary of Actions

SP to contact Steve Hemmett reference the anti-social behaviour at "The Perch".

SP to arrange for bridle path to be strimmed.

SP to implement a register for complaints with clear actions.

SP to make changes to website advising hauliers we do not receive trucks until 6am.

MB to locate area for Lorry Park near to Batts Combe for when Venns Gate is closed.

MB to provide 4 dates for quarterly meetings.

MB to arrange a team's call with transport managers and hauliers.

SP to speak with staff about their speed when leaving work at the end of the day

MMB to add minutes, quarry photo, location of speed signs photo and Hauliers rules to the community liaison website.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 8th September 2022

Thursday 8th December 2022

Thursday 9th March 2023

Thursday 8th June 2023

[ENDS]