

**Whatley and Westdown Quarries
Community Liaison Group Meeting
28 June 2022
Whatley Quarry and via Microsoft Teams**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Attended in person

Philip Ham (PH)	Councillor Somerset County Council, Mendip Central & East (Chair)
Ian Strachan (IS)	Hanson Aggregates, Strategic Development Manager (Part)
Vince Pitt (VP)	Hanson Aggregates, Unit Manager – Whatley Quarry
Trystan Mabbitt (TM)	Hanson UK Consenting and Development Manager
Barry Clark (BC)	Somerset County Council
Lisa Ramsay (LR)	Nunney Parish Council
Steve West (SW)	Mells parish Council
Ann Crowcombe (AC)	Cranmore Parish Council
Rob Farnfield (RF)	Head of Explosives Engineering at EPC UK
Steve Lashley (SL)	EPC UK
Charlotte Broughton (CB)	Environment and Sustainability Advisor Freightliner Group
Rebecca Parks (RP)	Safety and Sustainability Adviser South-West Freightliner Group
Samantha Stagg (SS)	James Reed PR, Communications for Hanson UK

Joined on a Teams call

Alexandra Hemming (AH)	Hanson Aggregates, Senior Landscape Architect
Mark Evans (ME)	Wood PLC
Neil Crump (NC)	Leigh on Mendip Parish Council
Alan Townsend (AT)	Coleford Parish Council
Martyn Ford (MF)	Senior Enforcement Officer (Planning, Rights of Way, Gypsies & Travellers) Somerset County Council (Part)
Richard King (RK)	Great Elm resident
Andrew Bramston (ABR)	Whatley & Chantry Parish Council
Paul Hooper (PHO)	Downhead Parish Council
Alison Barkshire (AB)	Mendip District Council for Ammerdown

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Colin Arnold (CA) Principal Planning Officer
- Will Palmer (WP) Whatley resident
- Richard Keith-Hill (RKH) Environmental Protection Officer, Mendip District Council
- Francis Hayden (FH) Mendip District Council, Cranmore Doultling and Nunney
- Steven Morton (SM) Hanson UK Marketing and Communications Manager
- Simon Stonehouse (SST) Natural England
- Lila Morris (LM) Somerset Wildlife Trust
- PC Toni Lines (TL) Avon and Somerset Police
- Jason Black (JB) Mendip Rail Ltd

AGENDA FOR WHATLEY AND WESTDOWN COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. **Introduction** – Chair Philip Ham
 - Welcome and Chair introductions
 - Review of minutes from last meeting
 - Matters arising from last minutes (issues relating to agenda items below will be covered as part of the meeting)
2. **Freightliner** – update by Charlotte Broughton, Environment and Sustainability Advisor Freightliner Group and Rebecca Parks, Safety and Sustainability Adviser South West Freightliner Group
3. **Whatley update** – Vince Pitt, Unit Manager Whatley quarry, Hanson UK
 - Operational overview
 - Logistics (including road and rail)
 - Feedback
 - Environmental
 - Blasting - including presentation/update by Rob Farnfield, Head of Explosives Engineering at EPC-UK
4. **Other sites and community update** – Ian Strachan, Strategic Development Manager, Hanson UK
 - Westdown
 - Community giving update
5. **Planning update: Whatley and Westdown** – Trystan Mabbitt, Consenting and Development Manager, Hanson UK
 - Westdown progress
 - Whatley ROMP
6. **AOBs**
 - Open Day
7. **Date of next meeting**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Chair's introduction

Welcome:

PH welcomed attendees to the hybrid meeting. Everyone round the table introduced themselves to the group and then those on the Teams call. It was noted that the sound on the call wasn't great and not everyone could be heard. This got better when the camera stream was removed.

Review of previous minutes:

- PH asked the Group to validate the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and reflective account. This was agreed and the minutes accepted by the Group.
- Given the extensive agenda, PH proposed that, if any outstanding issues were also a current meeting agenda item, that they should be discussed in line with the agenda rather than under 'actions from previous meeting'. This was agreed by the Group.
- Matters arising – AB asked if someone can explain decked blasting – IS said that RF from EPC will go through this in his presentation (part of agenda item 3.)
- Actions from previous meeting were all complete/on-going (see below).
- AOBs from last meeting:
 - Hanson to investigate feasibility of numbering HGVs on their doors for ease of identification, following proposal at Torr quarry liaison group. Darren Plant was going to look into this however he has now left the business. VP to follow up on this with the new Transport manager. *Action*
 - VP reviewed the verge and cut back, if necessary, re footpaths close to quarry entrance. A mini digger will be needed and the road will need to be closed which will require approval from SCC. SW suggested moving the hedges, to make a walkway verge. VP advised that this too would need approval for ecology reasons. SW suggested he could walk the route with VP to assess options.

2. Freightliner

Freightliner has the freight contract for Mendip Rail.

CB explained they are visiting sites to try and improve engagement and thanked the committee for the invitation. Explained that as a business Freightliner are looking at sustainability and how it can get away from using diesel. Some alternatives that have been in trials with running trains are:

1. **Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)** – Trials have shown that communities beside rail routes would benefit from 14% less oxides of nitrogen, 18% less ultrafine particulates and 12% lower carbon dioxide for every HVO fuelled train, in comparison to diesel. The trials prove that the fuel works as well as diesel however it is currently more expensive to produce.
2. **GD45** – This is like HVO but a little cheaper. It's a mix of 55% HVO and 45% 'Gas To Liquid' (GTL) which is a waste by-product of natural gas extraction. It has the same air quality benefits as HVO.
3. **Electrification** – Trickier to implement as full electric as only 38% of the UK's rail network is electrified - therefore where part of a route has not been electrified, a diesel locomotive must be used for the whole route.

4. **Dual Fuel Project** – The offer of substituting diesel wholly or partly with low emission HVO is already available to customers and Freightliner are also investigating other fuel sources such as Hydrogen, to prepare to phase out diesel traction in the coming decades.
5. **Diesel/Water Emulsion** – It is possible to replace up to 12% of the diesel with water, correctly blended to create an emulsion, without significant loss of power, producing a reduction on CO2 emissions. Investigations are ongoing to see if this percentage of water can be increased.
6. **Steam** – Freightliner is collaborating to develop hydrogen powered steam engines, in which oxygen and hydrogen are combined and ignited to produce high pressure steam to drive a turbine. The new steam engine emits nothing more harmful than a little water. They aim to produce replacement hydrogen power units for diesel locomotives which will combine zero emissions with lower lifecycle costs than battery and fuel cell alternatives.

In an effort to further reduce carbon emissions, Freightliner are also keeping an eye on the idle times of the locomotives, and they are shutting off engines when they are stopped for a longer length of time.

They will be tracking the waste and recycling, mapping waste streams in the most sustainable way. Currently 95% of general waste is sent for energy reclamation and the company is seeking to improve its current recycling figures with the implementation of an updated waste management strategy.

Focus on Biodiversity - Calculate the impact on the local wildlife without impacting on operations. Looking to use an RSPB tool to implement change that makes a difference.

(end of presentation)

SW asked what powers the steam turbine. CB confirmed it could be heated using Hydrogen power.

SS asked about shutting down the Locos for idling – are they noisy when starting up again. CB responded that they do sound the horn on restart, as it's a H&S issue, however they will have a look and see what can be done.

PH asked about the 2050 target – How are they benchmarking? CB said they are looking at benchmarking now, ready to set targets to work towards. As they are currently working with a lot of old technology, it's an exciting time to be getting involved.

CB clarified that HVO is currently slightly more expensive than diesel, even with the rising fuel prices. RP commented that solar is getting close to the cost of fossil fuels, and there will soon be a time when it's cheaper.

PH asked what HVO is made of. CB responded that it's mainly vegetable oil. It's excess oil that would have become waste, not veg that been grown specifically for fuel. She wasn't 100% sure of which crops are used.

When asked about the electric trains, CB replied that passenger trains which are entirely electric are designed to charge whilst using the electrified lines and will use the battery when on a diesel line. Freight would be too heavy for this technology right now, but there are ongoing trials.

PH suggested that Freightliner come again in a couple of years to update the group on progress. CB and RP would be happy to do this.

3. Whatley Quarry update

VP provided an update:

Operational overview:

- Volumes are currently at 2.3M tonnes, and on plan for 5.5M – this is down 200K tonnes on the same period last year.
- Three new lined 777 dumper trucks are now on site. There will be a further one in July and one in September. As these are fully-lined they should help reduce noise.
- The wheel wash project has been delayed until August due to supply issues, however materials are currently with the supplier.
- Replacement KEA – The older wagons will be leaving next week to be replaced in the near future.
- Haulier route sign – VP shared the sign that is now installed at the exit gate to remind drivers of the route they should be taking.
- Blast monitor – Four residences have been selected for regular monitoring, two are for the new fixed monitors, one other has agreed and we are waiting for one more to confirm.
- Fuel thefts – since we have switched to white diesel, fuel thefts are happening more, mostly on Saturday/Sunday nights. Security measures are in place and are improving things. It seems to be mostly lorry parks they are targeting elsewhere.
- We will be holding an open day on the **18th September** from 11am until 2pm

VP provided a summary of the onsite operational adaptations made over the last year plus an update on the roll out of Hanson's £10 million investment programme – which is being implemented to help mitigate the impact of the quarry.

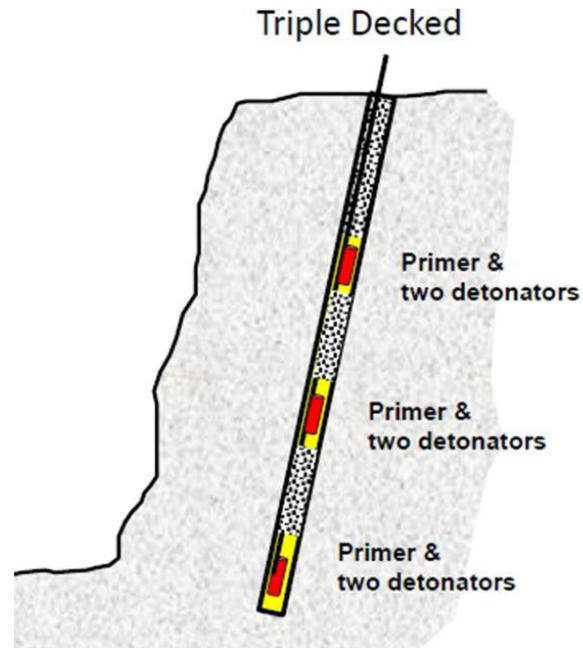
- Cessation of weekend working.
- Repairs and on-going maintenance to doors.
- Repairs and maintenance to cladding on buildings.
- Crash points changed to ceramic linings (where material falls from a conveyor belt).
- Reception hopper being left always one quart full to prevent full height fall of material.
- Head drums on conveyor belt lagged to prevent possible slip and squeal.
- Cessation of quarry extraction, including at the primary crusher, between 0.00 –06.00 wherever possible.
- Staged delivery of new truck liners.
- Fan inserts fitted.
- Weekend working on tip restricted unless required for H&S.

Plus:

- On-going training and communications with all drivers, restating key HGV driver protocols on required behaviour and need to use Somerset County Council's approved freight routes.
- In discussion with Komatsu – looking at sound insulation on dumpers as they come out of the pit. Looking to trial at Whatley.
- Adaptation of blast design and approach for blasts on south face of the quarry.
- Introduction of blast notification service

VP provided a recap on measures to mitigate the impact of blasts at Whatley.

- Two additional monitors are planned.
- The permitted levels for vibration as a result of quarry blasts are: PPV of 9 mm/s with a 95% confidence, and/or 12 mm/s with 99.9% confidence at any time.
- We continue to blasts to a voluntary Peak Particle velocity (PPV) limit of 4.5mm/s on south face, wherever possible.
- In response to the query from AB about decking the blast, the image shown here is a triple decked charge. This has the explosives charge split into 3 which will fire individually, timed one after another 4 milliseconds apart. The benefit of splitting the blast is that the explosions don't all happen at the same time, minimising the vibration of one single blast.

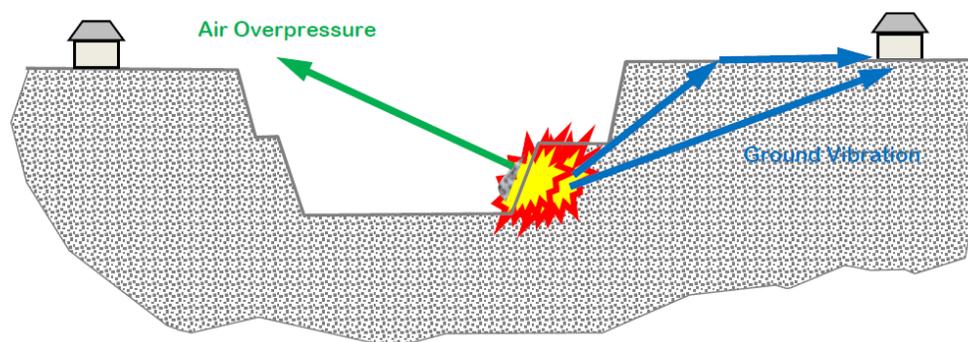


Presentation by Rob Farnfield, Head of Explosives Engineering at EPC-UK Blast Vibration at Whatley

Why are blasts felt differently?

The environmental impact is in two forms. Vibration through the ground and vibration through the air (Air overpressure).

The ground vibration is felt higher behind the blast and the air vibration is felt higher in front of the blast. Both are monitored at Whatley.



Where the vibrations (ground & air) of each are felt depends on the orientation of the blast. Ground vibrations are lower frequency and air vibrations are higher closer to the blast and die away with distance.

Everything has its own natural frequency and if it matches the blast, it will be felt more.

It also depends where you are, e.g. the blast frequency would be more noticeable inside a structure rather than outside.

RF then showed a video of a large column charged blast at Whatley where each hole had one charge in it, and there were 4ms between the blasts. RF advised regardless of the size of blast, this gave the same vibration level as it would have done if the shot was smaller, however it's felt for longer, as the number of shots is increased.

The weather conditions can also influence the way that each blast is experienced through the air. The geology of the area surrounding the blast will determine the vibrations felt through the ground, especially if there are faults, joints and bedding plates. Blast vibrations would rather travel along faults rather than try and pass through them.

This is why it's important to monitor the blasts at surrounding properties.

The permitted levels for vibration as a result of quarry blasts are: Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) of 9mm/s with a 95% confidence, and/or 12mm/s with 99.9% confidence at any time. When blasts are planned at Whatley, this PPV is predicted based on the calculations from previous blasts and the design is structured to voluntarily stay below 4.5mm/s PPV.

A lot of research has been done relating to damage due to ground vibration, which has generated BS7385 Pt 2. The limit suggested is 15mm/s at ground level, where the maximum permitted at Whatley is 12mm/s.

RF then displayed an image of a house set within a quarry and explained that the house was monitored to assess the damage that may have been caused by blasting.

They would have 3 blasts per day, and the lowest PPV level where damage was recorded to the house was 17mm/s, however most damage was recorded around 40mm/s.



(End of presentation)

ABR mentioned that they are experiencing a lot of vibration from bigger blasts that go on longer. AB said that the level of vibrations are quite dramatic, with clear shaking of the property, and has received a number of complaints about cracks. RF said that they reckon a blast over 3mm/s PPV can shake a house however it wouldn't do any damage.

ABR asked about the cumulative impact over a period of time. Suggested a limit of 4.5 mm/s was imposed, as people will continue to complain about the blasts that go over this. RF maintained that consistent monitoring will help.

BC asked about the US DIN standard and German measures which suggest the delicate older properties are exposed to a lower PPV. RF stated he was not aware of the details of this and that blasts here follow the strict guidelines set by the UK's regulators.

ABR then asked if houses don't have foundations, would a blast have more impact? RF said the house in the experiment had boulders for foundations.

ABR has sent in a video of a blast on Level 6 which caused very strong vibrations. Wanted to have feedback on it. RF explained that the air overpressure travels slower than the ground vibrations, so extends the experience. If it was a south blast, the ground vibrations will have been felt first, then the air vibrations would have bounced off the north side then travelled back towards the south causing the houses to the south to experience the blast for longer.

(Ian Strachan left the meeting)

ABR acknowledged he has a mobile monitor at his property and was offered a fixed monitor.

Negative Feedback

VP shared some graphs which recorded that the negative feedback towards the quarry was reducing. This was countered by ABR who suggested that people are complaining less due to a lack of response. He has received complaints from people saying nothing has changed. The blasting and noise levels haven't improved.

TM said they would welcome comments from residents regarding mitigation efforts however he is concerned about the sweeping statements that nothing has improved as extensive operational changes have been made as well as the investment in plant outlined by VP.

ABR said that blast complaints arise because there are more blasts over 4.5mm/s, at least one a month, which he felt was not acceptable. Also, there was a lot of noise over the jubilee weekend, and he questioned why rail repairs needed to be done over the holiday weekend at night. SS explained it was due to emergency repairs, which couldn't wait as it caused a Health & Safety issue. VP added that by 7pm when they realised the repairs were not done, they should have stopped and started again in the morning. He agreed that communication in this instance was poor.

ABR asked if the community could have a say when works are planned so they can give an opinion. VP offered to put details on the community email.

AB asked what emergency can cause overnight work? VP advised it track repairs were required to prevent the risk of a derailment. Freight trains were backing up and needed loading and getting out on time. CB added that a late freight train messes up the rail network and causes delays across the mainlines around the country and incurs a cost to sort out.

ABR suggested then it was an economic decision to carry on working. SS pointed out this was primarily a H&S issue due to the risk of derailment. VP said this is all part of learning and will consider the impact on residents when the next shutdown is planned. ABR stated that they just want to co-exist amicably, not trying to shut down the site. He has another video with noise levels at 11:30pm, just wants Hanson to consider the residents when planning works.

VP agreed and will look into the sound levels. *Action*

4. Westdown and community update

IN IS absence TM explained the proposals to update existing planning consents has been collated into one consolidated report and will be sending details of the submitted proposals shortly. Considering pulling together a church hall meeting to share the proposals with residents and consultees. Would like the opportunity to explain the plans and talk about concerns.

TM then went on to say that Hanson had to take action against the protestor groups on Health & Safety grounds, and now the camp ceased to exist.

TM asked if anyone had any questions.

LR asked if we can control the motorbikes at Asham. TM explained that currently it doesn't matter what we do, nothing seems to stop them. Once we are operational, we would be able to do something about them. LR said it always seems to be the same bikes. ABR suggested setting up CCTV.

TM explained that there is CCTV and it does capture the images and advised IS is constantly on call to 101. ABR confirmed that Chantry residents are happy to report them. LR suggested that the more reports to the police, the better the response will be. PM also noted that people need to make sure they get the crime reference if submitting a report.

AH explained that Hanson has looked at several options regarding motorbikes but cannot put a new barrier across the footpath due to the Disability Discrimination Act. If there isn't already a barrier there, we cannot introduce a new one. This makes it very difficult to stop them.

AB asked about the onward journeys for lorries, the documents detail up to Nunney however don't specify beyond there. TM will come back to the group on this one. *Action*

NC asked if some signs can be put up saying No Shooting. AH said to report any shooting to the police. As it is a firearms issue, they should take it more seriously, especially if more people get in touch. There is CCTV on the footpath at access points. Signs just get vandalised.

NC said he picks up lots of shots on his walks, could there be signs to suggest reporting any shooting to the police.

AH advised that Hanson may look at deer control soon so some shooting may be needed for forestry management purposes. NC asked if Hanson could advise when shooting is in progress to protect dog walkers. AH confirmed this should be well away from the footpath however agreed to let them know.

Community Giving initiatives

SS provided an update on recent recipients including;

- Whatley and Chantry Community Association – funding to support Jubilee event
- 1st North Mendip Scout Group – Funding support for new archery equipment
- Nunney First School – Support for raffle prize
- Frome Lions – Boulder for Cheese Field
- U12 Frome Rugby – Support for new kit

- We are currently waiting to get an update on application for Nunney Village hall

DRAFT

Our approach is to prioritise support for initiatives supporting:

- Education, skills, and wellbeing
- Protecting/enhancing the environment and
- Promoting the community and heritage of the East Mendips.

Assistance is prioritised to groups making applications from within the BA11 postcode, particularly those based within a 3km radius. Can include financial support, materials donation, or input from Hanson volunteers.

More details at: www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/whatley-and-westdown-quarry-community-page/supporting-the-community

Hanson also has a volunteer initiative, where employees can take a day out to help in the community, so let us know if you have a project that needs people.

5. Planning update: Whatley and Westdown

TM explained we are currently awaiting Pre-Application advice with regards to the new ecological surveys required by SCC to support the ROMP application process as unable to progress without their response. ROMP first submitted in 2012 and remains undetermined by SCC. TM will update the group once we know. Currently out for consultation with Ruth at SCC.

6. AOBs

Whatley Quarry open day – **Sunday 18th September 2022**. The main event will be focused in the quarry office area, with quarry tours down into the extraction area.

Lands Update – Alexandra Hemming, Senior Landscape Architect

Vallis Vale Update. Currently mainly restoration design and ecology along with land management. Main thing we are focused on right now is Ash Dieback, with a large amount of felling going on at Vallis Vale and had to get an extension beyond the end of June, to the end of August. This is overseen by Somerset Wildlife Trust to ensure no harm is done to wildlife in the area.

An additional 50 trees have been identified and plan to fell them at the end of September.

There is also management plan on the riverbanks. There were complaints about ash on the footpaths and in rivers, concerns about flooding. Concentrating on clearing the site and making it safe. It's a work in progress

AB said she had a concerned constituent regarding the works, asked if we could put a sign up. AH advised she is working with the earth science centre to share the message with the locals. It's all being done with the appropriate authorities, and she has walked around with RK and is happy to go round with anyone else who wants to. AB said she would like to join AH on a walk around.

RK suggested an update for the local parish magazine 5 Alive would be appreciated.

It was commented that there were sightings of giant hogweed at Vallis Vale, which has now been disposed of, however it does come back every year. AH asked if anyone spots it, to please send her a What3Words and she will find out who is responsible, if it's not on Hanson Land.

Asham Update. We are updating the management plan and are 5 years into it. A new one is being drafted. The hazardous tree survey is being done in Winter and we will get another one done in the summer as the leaves on the trees represent a different hazard.

The wind-blown tress have been cleared, however let AH know if you find any more.

Currently working on getting a veteran tree survey done to find out where they are.

Deer management is ongoing. Coppicing the fence off to stop the deer.

7. **Next meeting date**

Wednesday 5th October 17:30.

RK suggested online that dates are set 1 year in advance and not by discussion at the end of the meeting. *Action*