

Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
8th December 2022
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- 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 Ayres (BA) Hanson Aggregates, land & mineral resource manager
- Alex Hemming (AH) Hanson Aggregates, senior landscape architect
- James Hynes (JRH) Hanson estates surveyor
- Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) Axbridge Town Council
- Nick Hoof (NH) Resident
- Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) Cheddar Parish Council
- Sally Devlin (SD) Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Graham Godwin-Pearson (GP) Sedgemoor District Council
- Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) Somerset County Council
- Steve Hemmett (SH) Avon & Somerset Police
- Jim Hardcastle (JH) Mendip Hills AONB
- Andy Langston (AL) EHO office Sedgemoor District Council
- Ruth Amundson (RA) Somerset County Council Planning
- Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) Somerset County Council

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. Welcome and Chair introductions - Chair Mike Brown (MB)
 - Membership Update
2. Review of minutes and actions from last meeting – Mike Brown (MB)
3. Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update – Simon Parkes (SP)
 - Feedback & Complaints
4. Land and Mineral Planning update – Ben Ayres (BA)
5. Landscape and biodiversity update – Alex Hemmings (AH)
6. Hanson Transport update - Simon Parkes (SP)
7. Environmental Health update – no attendance
8. District Council update – no attendance
9. Local Resident update – Nick Hoof (NH)
10. Parish Council update – Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) & Cllr Paul Fineran (PF)
11. AOBs

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction

- MB welcomed attendees to the meeting
- Membership update - MB introduced James Hynes to the group. MB advised he had spoken with BF today and proposed that he chair future meetings subject to everyone agreeing. All group members agreed. MB asked if it was ok to pass on the group members email addresses to BF, again all group members agreed.

2. Review of minutes and actions from last meeting

- MB matters arising from the previous meeting and published minutes - Andrew Sinclair, who lives on Hannay Road, contacted MB & NH about the last minutes and the reference to the point "police directing lorries into Hannay Road" being in breach of the legal traffic order. For clarification, Police action of this nature would only take place in emergencies, e.g., in the unlikely event of a concrete mixer overturning at the magic roundabout, and it was agreed that the exceptional nature of such Police action would be clarified in the minutes to highlight that Hanson is not seeking to minimise the historic frequency of HGV's breaching the legal traffic order. To clarify the point, Hanson will not instruct any HGV's to disobey the traffic order unless directed by the police.
- NH asked if such a traffic redirection would need to be Police led, which MB confirmed. NH confirmed he is now happy with the amendment to the previous minutes.
- MB went through the remaining actions from the previous minutes.
 1. The approved minutes from the September liaison meeting had been uploaded to the Batts Combe community web page.
 2. SP showed the group the complaints log now in place.
 3. MB is still working on a location for the lorry park, and not convinced the old Yeo Valley site is the correct location after looking at google maps. MB asked JH to look at an area for a lorry park.
 4. A camera at height to check sheeting on lorries will be installed in the new year. A post is in place at the entrance of the quarry to mount the camera on and Hanson are waiting for electrical contractors to provide a date to complete works.
 5. MB spoke with SH today who has agreed to carry out Police speed monitoring in addition to the speed monitoring carried out by Batts Combe staff.
 6. BA had been in touch with the landowner re installing a footpath at Venns Gate, which will be covered in the agenda of this meeting.
 7. SP will advise on contacting customers regarding sheeting in the transport section.
 8. SP updated haulier rules and inductions for collect customer to advise of the "STOP" signs in Axbridge, and that they must give way to the left and the right.
 9. MB contacted ops manager at Callow Rock to advise this issue with the "STOP" signs in Axbridge who has also informed their drivers.
 10. Electronic speed sign on order and will discuss in transport section of the agenda.

3. Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update

- SP showed an aerial view photo of the quarry showing the changes to it since the last meeting in September.
- MB asked NH if he'd had a tour of the quarry yet. NH replied that he hadn't but would like to. SP said it could be organised anytime NH would like.
- SP advised that the volumes the site is producing are dropping in tonnage year on year. This is mainly due to reduced volumes going to Hinkley Point.
- MB advised there had been a general quietening down of sales. MB advised Hanson will be keeping an eye on the market.
- SP advised that the customer base at Batts Combe is changing, and they are getting a lot more customers who collect.
- SP showed the Batts Combe complaint log and advised most of the complaints on it are for collect customers. There were 16 complaints logged since the last meeting, broken down into the categories below.
 - 6 Speeding
 - 5 Public highway incidents
 - 4 Onsite rule breaking
 - 1 No sheeting
- MB explained the complaints log being shown had been redacted, with the removal of customer and resident names to ensure GDPR compliance, but the date and the detail of the complaint remains in full.
- MB went through each complaint in more detail and SP said all parties involved had been spoken to, with those to whom the complaints had been directed taking the feedback on board and taking an active interest to ensure the issues are resolved.
- MB advised he had been on a ride-a-long recently and if anyone would like to do it, he would happily organise with the transport department. He said he noticed that when the driver was going into Venns Gate, he had to almost come to a complete stop due to the angle of the road, and then accelerate up the incline to get going again. MB said he thought this is maybe what the residents hear.
- MB advised one of the complaints on the log was for a haulier who had inadvertently left the tailgate open, which had resulted in material falling onto the road. He said hauliers are instructed to close tailgates before departing, adding that Hanson pay for road sweeping daily.
- SP showed the speed monitoring result since the last meeting and, in November, the speeds had increased. Hanson have the registration numbers of the hauliers and had a meeting with the transport manager of the relevant customer this week. The transport manager advised he would not use repeat offenders. Hanson will also be undertaking more speed monitoring. MB said the Police will also be carrying out speed monitoring.

- NH asked if Hanson have details of how many vehicles were picked up on the monitoring, given that the speed monitoring graph shows that a quarter of vehicles were above 15MPH.
- MB replied we do have the details and would send to NH by email.
- NH said that since the 20MPH signs have been installed, he felt the speed had increased.
- SP said the speed monitoring figures suggest that this is true.
- NH said he thought the speed monitoring being done covertly was a good idea.
- SP said nearly all drivers have a CB and they tell each other, the same as when the Police are speed monitoring and people put it on social media.
- NH said he would be happy for Hanson staff carrying out the monitoring to use his garden. It would be a safe spot so they wouldn't have to wear Hi-Vis and they could stand behind a wall.
- NH asked if residents have ever been able to use the speed monitoring cameras, or could they?
- MB said he was not keen on residents using the cameras but was happy for someone to stand with our staff while they carry out the speed monitoring.
- NH said a compromise then would be to be more covert to get accurate figures.
- MB said most importantly Hanson need to increase speed monitoring.
- SP updated the group on some events that had been organised since the last meeting. Axbridge First School had visited the quarry. BA and AH subsequently visited the school to do quarrying related activities with the children, and both events were well received. There was also a donation of material and labour to Cheddar Scout Hut to improve the groups' outside area.
- SP advised of a colouring competition for pupils at Cheddar, Axbridge and Draycott First Schools, of which the winner won a colouring pens set and the task of turning on the Batts Combe Christmas star.
- SD said the careers event at Kings of Wessex went well and that Hanson had the best stand. She said she had even had emails from parents about enthusiastic students. She also said she had Hanson pencilled in for other events in the new year.
- SP said Hanson like to get involved with the community, not just with donations of material or money, but with our staff using their volunteering days.

4. Land and Mineral Planning update

- BA advised there was not a lot to add since the last meeting. He said RA will organise a visit, it had not been organised yet due to workload but will in January.
- BA advised Hanson expects that Somerset CC Planning will serve notice on Hanson as part of the periodic ROMP review process during early 2023.

- BA advised Restoration of the Jefferies quarry waste material tip is likely to take place in 2023/24.

5. Landscape & Biodiversity update

- AH pointed out the Jefferies tip area due for restoration on the aerial view photo of the quarry.
- AH advised she had received the latest survey for hazardous trees re Ash dieback. Two trees need felling urgently plus two more will need to be felled soon. Hanson are liaising with Natural England and the Forestry Commission regarding the appropriate approvals.
- AH said scrub clearance at The Perch (SSSi) this winter is later than planned because of contractors being so busy.
- MB asked why is the perch SSSI. AH replied it was because of calcareous grasslands, woodlands, dormice and bats.
- AH advised an information board for The Perch is in its first draft to check and approve.
- AH advised Hanson are working with the National Trust re a goat and sheep mission statement. She said she thought a resolution was some way off, with a key issue being understanding if they are wildlife or livestock. The annual count will take place on 6th January.
- SP asked PF which path he was referring to in reference to an email PF had sent to site about a complaint about a public footpath. PF said it was an area that had trees blocking the way. SP said he had found an area where trees had been felled recently and PF replied that it may well have been resolved as the complaint was also sent to Somerset County Council (SCC).
- AH raised a point re a gate having been put up on the Tower Testing road, but Hanson and the National Trust have a right of way. PF said the roadway was part of the old quarry (Chelmscombe) and people have been using it as a public footpath, but it is now in fact private property. The owners have put up gates to prevent people using it. BA said AH and JRH to discuss.
- PF is to confirm whether a dormouse EPS licence is in place for works happening adjacent to a Hanson landholding, where dormice are known to be. AH commented that dormice numbers are falling in the areas that are surveyed around the quarry and that sufficient mitigation needs to be in place for any tree felling works to help slow the decline.
- AH said any issues with footpaths to get in contact with her anytime.

6. Hanson Transport update

- SP covered most of this in the Hanson Site update section.
- MB advised Hanson is still working on developing a footpath on Venns Gate. BA had spoken with the landowner. Feedback is now needed from within Somerset County Council- a safety team, the adoption department and design department.

- NH asked if the conifers would need to be removed. BA replied the idea was to put a fence up against the conifers, with some hardcore membrane, something to filter water through. It's now in the hands of contracting, planning and the landowner. Understandably, the landowner did not want to have the trees cut down.

7. Environmental Health update

- AL could not attend the meeting but had confirmed this week that the EA had not received any complaints about Batts Combe since the last meeting.

8. District Council update

- No attendance from District Council.

9. Local Resident update

- NH asked if the sign at the quarry exit was up saying cars 20MPH and trucks 15MHP. MMB said she had failed to add it to the actions from the last meeting, but it will be added to the actions in these minutes.
- NH said he noticed on the Batts Combe web page that the arrival time for lorries was 6am and the earliest exit time was 6:30am, and just wanted to clarify.
- SP said that is correct, we don't open the exit gate until 6:30am.
- NH said he thought everything had been answered during the meeting. He had requested feedback from the residents on Monday but had not heard back from anyone, so nothing to report.

10. Parish Council update

- MT said there was nothing from Axbridge but thank you for inviting him. He had learned a lot and really enjoyed the meetings. He said re a lorry park, there was an area by Callow Rock owned by them that may be suitable. BA asked where it was and SP replied it was the bell mouth of the old quarry. MB asked SP to speak with his contact at Callow Rock.
- PF said he'd had one complaint about dust but not yet had the detail on the issue. He will update site when he has more information. SP replied he had not had any blasting or environmental complaints.
- SD said it was really important to have Hanson at the careers event at Kings of Wessex and asked if we could put next year's date in the diary, which is 18th October 2023.
- SD advised Kings of Wessex have launched work experience for year 10 & 12, and Hanson may have students getting in touch.

11. AOBs

- MB advised that an employee at St Michaels Cheshire Home on Cheddar Road had been in touch about their residents not being able to access the reservoir or Cheddar Woods Leisure site due to footpaths not being wide enough for large mobility scooters, and the road being too dangerous to cross.
- MB said he felt this was not a Hanson responsibility but would help if we could. MT said it would be covered by Axbridge Town Council and to pass on details of the clerk to St Michaels.
- PF said there had been a crossing mentioned in the planning of the Yeo Valley residential development and the Cheddar Neighbourhood plan supported it. They had been trying to get Highways to improve a crossing at the magic roundabout, but it was turned down as Somerset County Council deemed it as not required. Sedgemoor even sent the head of planning but still drew a blank as not enough fatalities to warrant it.
- PF said he appreciated the offer of help though.
- MB said he would contact the member of staff to let her know.

Summary of Actions

- MMB to upload approved minutes from September's meeting to the Batts Combe Web Page.
- MMB to send BF all group members' contact details.
- MB & JRH to continue search for lorry park.
- MB to send NH details of speed monitoring.
- SP to increase frequency of speed monitoring and liaise with NH about using his property.
- AH & JRH to discuss gate that has been put up at Chelmscombe quarry.
- SP to put up a sign on the exit gate saying Cars 20MPH Trucks 15MPH.
- SP to speak to contact at Callow Rock about lorry park.
- MMB to add KOW careers event to the diary 18/10/2023.
- MB to contact St Michaels to explain about footpaths and pass on details of Axbridge Town Clerk.
- SP & NH to get together to figure out where to put flashing speed sign.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 9th March 2023

Thursday 8th June 2023

Thursday 7th September 2023

Thursday 7th December 2023

[ENDS]