

**Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
8th June 2023
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry**

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

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| • Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) | Somerset County Council |
| • Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) | Axbridge Town Council |
| • Ashley Chambers (AC) | Resident |
| • Jim Hardcastle (JH) | Mendip Hills AONB |
| • Sally Devlin (SD) | Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy |
| • Ruth Amundson (RA) | Somerset County Council Planning |
| • Ben Ayers (BA) CHAIR | Hanson Land & Mineral Resource Manager |
| • Simon Parkes (SP) | Hanson Aggregates, Batts Combe quarry unit manager |
| • Michelle Beasley (MB) | Hanson Aggregates, secretariat |
| • Alex Hemming (AH) | Hanson Aggregates, senior landscape architect |
| • James Hynes (JRH) | Hanson Land & Mineral Estates Surveyor |

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

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| • Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR | Somerset County Council |
| • Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) | Cheddar Parish Council |
| • Laura Bonell (LB) | Avon & Somerset Police |
| • Andy Langston (AL) | EHO office Sedgemoor District Council |
| • Nick Hoof (NH) | Resident |

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

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

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction

- BA welcomed attendees to the meeting
- Membership update – BA introduced himself and advised BF who had volunteered to chair future meetings had not responded to the invite on this occasion. He went on to ask all attendees to introduce themselves and set out their roles. AC is new to the group due to NH not being available on this occasion.
- BA asked everyone if they had read the draft minutes from the previous liaison meeting, and if they were happy with the content. All attendees were happy, and MB will arrange to have the approved minutes uploaded to the Batts Combe community web page.
- BA went through the actions from the previous meeting, all of which had been completed.

2. Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update

- SP advised that they were continuing to work in the south easterly corner of the quarry, with approximately 2 million tonnes still to extract. He said Hanson had decided not to strip the mid tip area yet. AH is looking at prices to complete some hydro seeding.
- SP advised the site had had a monitoring visit on 30th March and was given a clean bill of health with only a couple of small items to follow up on by the LMR department.
- BA said the monitoring report focused on two of the main planning conditions to check if they are non-compliant.
- BA asked RA if the planning department puts the report on its website. RA said she wasn't sure but has a copy with her should anyone wish to see it.
- AC asked if this was monitoring visit was related to the ROMP. (Review of mineral planning)
- BA advised this was not the case, this is just a visit to ensure Hanson are complying with the planning permissions. Every quarry in the UK must pay for site monitoring visits carried out by the planning authority, these cost £397.00 per visit.
- AH showed a list of all the conditions and said all of the planning conditions were monitored this time, whereas last time only a handful were monitored.
- SP showed on the screen the complaints the site had received since the last meeting and showed some photo's Hanson had received from a resident. The photo's showed HGV's breaking the weight restriction in Hannay Road. The HGVs in the pictures were not related to Batts Combe quarry, but to other businesses in Warren's Hill.
- SP advised the committee of the induction process the HGV drivers must complete before they are allowed to go to Batts Combe.

- SP said Hanson were still working on putting a footpath on Venns Gate. Hanson Contracting have created a design but there is more work to do before it can be submitted to Highways.
- AC said you could put a footpath in my garden.
- SP said it's something we can discuss, and BA will follow up outside of the meeting.
- MB mentioned she had also received a complaint about dust.
- SP confirmed that a resident in Cheddar had sent him photos of dust on his son's car, which had only been parked there over the weekend. SP said the quarry had not been operating at weekends, but there are a few housing developments in progress in the area, including one opposite the quarry.
- SP said the resident knew about the development but thought Hanson was responsible for the new development under construction in Chelmscombe Quarry.
- AH said it was sold in the 1970's and used to test pylons. Hanson sold the surface interest but retained minerals.
- AH said owners had put in planning permission to build holiday homes, which was rejected and as far as she was aware the site was then sold on.
- BA said housing was approved at a district level, but their planning permission does not contain planning conditions to reflect the presence of a quarry next door, so anyone buying one of these homes will not be aware that the quarry is operational and there will be the potential for noise/vibration from blasting.
- BA said the reason we are flagging this, is because we have had complaints of noise and dust, but it's not always related to Hanson's quarry.
- AC said he's lived in the area for 4 years, and the dust now is higher than it was when he first moved in, and the quarry operation is substantially less now, so the dust is coming from the housing developments that seem to be increasing.
- SP said Hanson have 4 directional dust monitors around Cheddar and it's been found that the times when the dust readings have been high, it was caused by road works.

3. **Land and Mineral Planning update**

- BA talked about the monitoring reports mentioned earlier, and that Hanson can be monitored up to four times a year.
- RA said it would depend on the results from the monitoring visit, but this site is OK, so it would probably be twice in a year.
- BA said this applies to all quarries, not just the operation ones, it applies to closed ones as well.
- RA said yes, there are a lot of sites and only 2 of us that do it.

- BA said Hanson are currently waiting to be served notice on the ROMP review, when this is done Hanson are likely to have 18 months to submit the scheme with updated planning conditions that form part of the ROMP process.
- JRH said reference the gate that has been put up at Chelmscombe, Hanson does have access through it.
- JH said the gate has ANPR, and if you contact the owner and give them your number plate, they will add it to the system. We did it for the National Trust truck so now we have access. The gate opens when we pull up to it.
- AH said we should do that as Hanson have right of access.

4. Landscape & Biodiversity update

- AH advised we are continuing to get anti-social behaviour and littering at The Perch. The signs are now up. Does anyone have any ideas what to do next to try and stop it?
- PH asked if the Police could help. AH replied it's not part of the highway, so not sure if they would.
- AC asked if bin could be put up.
- AH replied then they would have to be emptied/maintained, which is not feasible.
- AC said could volunteers be organised to clean up.
- SP said if any residents wanted to volunteer to help clean up, he would provide food and drinks for them.
- AH said she was not so worried about littering as she was about fires being started.
- AH said there had not been any update on the sheep regarding whether they are livestock or feral.
- JH said a decision was likely to be made later in the year, and another count would need to be organised. He went on to say the goats come down in the spring to feed and they go back up, most of which are ok. We have photos of the one's who cause problems. The sheep are the bigger problem. If they are declared livestock, each one will have to be tagged. If declared feral, whoever's land they are on, can manage them however they like.
- AH said that Hanson were part of a collaborative group with National Trust and Longleat as well as other landowners to monitor the goat and sheep populations and to agree management of the populations going forward as they were having a significant impact on the ongoing tree planting in the quarry.
- BA said reference the AONB meetings, if AH was not available to attend maybe JRH or SP could go in her place.
- AH asked JH if he had a date yet for the next meeting, to which JH said no.

5. Hanson Transport update

- SP said MP Connect is now up and running. The site induction gets emailed to the driver and must be completed before they arrive at site. Apart from one driver who didn't complete it in advance and stopped in Hannay Road to do so for which he was reprimanded, the roll out has been successful and is helping to ensure drivers adhere to Hanson protocols.

6. Environmental Health update

- No attendance from Environment Agency.
- BA asked SP if the EA had visited.
- SP replied, the EA had visited and said they would come back in June, which has not yet been confirmed

7. Council update

- PH said there was nothing to raise.

8. Local Resident update

- AC said the road sweeper only sweeps one side of Venns Gate, please can you ask them to clean both sides. SP replied he would speak to the sweeper.
- AC asked if it was possible to operate outside of school hours, as some other quarries do.
- SP said Hanson had investigated it but because of all the different school hours in Cheddar, and most of our customers are collects, it would be very difficult to manage and possibly cause issue with irresponsible behaviour, trying to cram them into tight time schedules.
- BA outlined that Hanson operates to its planning permission and said revising these is not something Hanson would look at as a business, unless it came up as part of the ROMP.
- PH added that the quarry was not really near a school.
- AC said I have two children that walk to school and a neighbour also has two children that walk to school. Having a footpath will make a big difference.
- AC said the speed monitoring charts had not been updated on the website.
- MB said it was being worked on, but Hanson's computer drives were down for weeks which has restricted access to data. The drives are now back up and the website will be updated asap.
- SP said regarding the flashing speed sign, what data would you like to see? There are huge amounts of data being captured, it's trying to get the information you would like.

- AC said he thought the information was ok, but one thing that's been suggested among the residents is for someone to stand outside in Hi-Viz clothing, and hand letters to the drivers saying, "Thank you for driving slowly".
- SP said it was a good idea, and something we could do.
- AC said we could maybe have a green letter and a red letter. Thank you or slow down!
- SP said he's written regular letters to hauliers.
- AC asked if the flashing speed sign was going to be moved to a different location.
- SP said we need to think about where it's going to go, as it will need to be chained down. Possibly on someone's property.
- AC said the young lad that was doing the speed monitoring was really good at hiding and asked if he was still doing it as not seen him. SP replied he is still monitoring along with other staff.
- AS asked if it was possible to get the hauliers to do a speed awareness course.
- SP said it was a good idea. First, we need to try engaging with them and then we could try a speed awareness course.
- AC asked if SP would supply some convex mirrors.
- SP replied he can, and asked AC to find out how many.

9. Parish Council update

- PH said vehicles were still not stopping at the "STOP" signs in Axbridge and wondered if putting up a sign that says "applies to the left and right" may work.
- AC said we have the same issue by the garage.

10. AOBs

- RA said just to advise you all, the local government reorganisation happened on 1st April, and we are now covering planning for four districts. The top 3 tiers are in place. Duncan Sharkey – Chief Executive. Mickey Green – Executive Director of Climate and Place. Paul Hickson – Strategic Commissioning Manager – Economy and Planning. The next step will be to appoint a chief planner by the end of the year, and there may be changes to the teams. If you have any minerals and waste enquiries, contact me or Colin Arnold.
- RA went on to say there are two vacant posts, which can't be filled until the new structure is on place. The planning apprentice left. We have a shortage of planners and particularly planners with waste and mineral experience.
- RA said BA mentioned the monitoring visit. All conditions were fully complied with except the ones that had ceased.
- RA said regarding the ROMP, notices haven't yet gone out, but we are working on them, and I'll try and get them out asap. Then Hanson have 18 months to submit a ROMP application.

- RA said she had not received any complaints since the last meeting or the meeting before.
- SP said also the Police had not received any complaints.
- MB said the Police want to encourage people to call them to report anything. We have a new police officer (LB) who will be able to attend the next meeting.
- SD said she wanted to thank Hanson for supporting the employability skills day at Kings of Wessex School and for the energy and enthusiasm put in from the Hanson staff to support the event. It raised some interesting debates, role play, and they loved the Hanson pencils. Hanson also supported the careers café and on top of that have two year 10 and two year 12 students coming for work experience.
- MB asked if anyone knew about what was happening with the Yeo Valley site and the promise of a footpath when the development planned is under way.
- SP said investment in the magic roundabout would be good as it's a terrible junction.
- MT said the final application for the site is yet to be submitted.
- BA said if there is nothing else to add, we will close this meeting and the next meeting is Thursday 7th September.

Summary of Actions

- MB to upload approved minutes from previous meeting to the Batts Combe community page.
- BA to discuss with AC about the possibility of using his property for a footpath on Venns Gate.
- AH to contact owners of Chelmscombe to get registration number of a Hanson vehicle added to the ANPR.
- SP to speak with sweeper about sweeping both sides of Venns Gate.
- MB to update speed monitoring data on Batts Combe community page.
- SP to order convex mirror for AC.

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 7th September 2023

Thursday 7th December 2023

Thursday 7th March 2024

Thursday 6th June 2024

[ENDS]