

Batts Combe Quarry
Community Liaison Group Meeting
7th September 2023
Meeting Room at Batts Combe Quarry

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

- Cllr Ben Ferguson (BF) CHAIR Somerset County Council
- Cllr Mike Taylor (MT) Axbridge Town Council
- Nick Hoof (NH) Resident
- Simon Parkes (SP) Hanson Aggregates, Batts Combe quarry unit manager
- Michelle Beasley (MB) Hanson Aggregates, secretariat
- Ben Ayers (BA) Hanson Land & Mineral Resource Manager
- Jops Dann Hanson Social Value Co-ordinator

APOLOGIES AND MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Lauren Bonell (LB) Avon & Somerset Police
- Jim Hardcastle (JH) Mendip Hills AONB
- Martin Stoyles (MS) EHO Somerset Council
- Ruth Amundson (RA) Somerset County Council Planning
- Sally Devlin (SD) Careers – Kings of Wessex Academy
- Alex Hemming (AH) Hanson Aggregates, senior landscape architect
- Cllr Paul Fineran (PF) Cheddar Parish Council
- James Hynes (JRH) Hanson Land & Mineral Estates Surveyor
- Cllr Pauline Ham (PH) Somerset County Council

AGENDA FOR BATTS COMBE QUARRY COMMUNITY LIAISON MEETING

1. Welcome and Chair introductions (BF)
 - Membership update
2. Review of minutes and actions from last meeting (BF)
3. Hanson site update (SP)
 - Feedback and complaints
 - Name change
4. Hanson transport update (SP)
5. Land and mineral Planning update (BA)
6. Landscape and biodiversity update (SP)
7. Environmental health update
8. Council update
9. Local resident update (NH)
10. AOB

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Chair introduction

- BF welcomed attendees to the meeting
- Membership update – BF re-introduced himself and apologised for not attending the previous meeting. He asked everyone if they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting, and if they were happy for the draft to be finalised. All attendees said they were happy with the minutes from the previous meeting.
- BA said there were a few apologies (which are detailed above) and suggested introductions due to new attendees.
- JD introduced herself as the Social Value and FAIR Co-Ordinator, she has been in the role for four and a half months, of which a part of it is community engagement. With her role extending to sites across the UK.
- JD's role is to ensure community engagement plans are organised, consistently applied, recorded, and monitored.
- All other attendees introduced themselves and their roles within the liaison group.
- BF went through the actions from the previous meeting. BA had not been in touch with AC reference footpath, so this will stay on the actions list.
- SP said Hanson have a similar plan for a footpath on Venns Gate, have received quotes from Hanson Contracting, and are ready to submit the plans to Somerset Council's planning department - other than BA having a bit of work to do regarding who will be responsible for it once its finished.
- MT asked if Venns Gate was one-way.
- NH replied there is a weight restriction which is one way, but small vehicles can go in both directions.
- NH asked SP if he was able to share the plans with the residents.
- SP replied he would be able to share when Hanson are ready to submit them.
- BF asked if the access via the ANPR to Chelmescombe quarry had been sorted, to which MB replied it had.
- BF asked if the sweeper had been asked to sweep both sides of Venns Gate.
- SP replied yes, they have a big sweeper that can sweep both sides at the same time, but it's not always available. So, on the occasions it's not, we can arrange to get a supervisor to stop the traffic while the sweeper is going against the grain, to sweep the side that gets missed.
- NH asked SP if he could speak the sweepers, as even they have been going too fast recently.

- The last action was to order a convex mirror. SP said it had been ordered 3 times, but still not delivered. Would have to look at a different supplier.

2. **Batts Combe (Hanson Site) update**

- SP showed a photo of the quarry to point out the next section where extraction was being planned. SP said the focus over the next couple of years was on the south East corner.
- SP said Batts Combe had recently seen a higher number of collections by customers using their own transport making control of hauliers a little more challenging.
- SP said Batts Combe has a contractor on site to help crush and process lesser quality top rock, as we don't want to put it through our fixed plant crushing operation, due to it contaminating the good quality material.
- NH said does this mean the contractors will be bring the machinery in through Venns Gate.
- SP said no, the machinery for the crushing comes in through the back gate at the top of the quarry.
- MT asked what will happen to the material.
- SP said as its lesser quality material, it will be used to produce fill material and Gabion stone.
- NH asked if we would see an increase in transport because of the extra material being produced and sold.
- SP said no, it's part of the normal balance of materials produced and sold from the site and it's how poor-quality material is processed from time to time in the quarry.
- SP said there had been a few personnel changes since the last meeting.
- SP showed an aerial view of the quarry and pointed out a line across and said Hanson had notified the Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) that they would be blasting south of that line under the current planning permission operating conditions. It's something that has be done if blasting in that area.

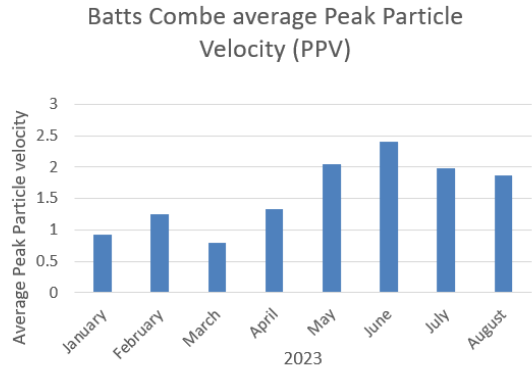
Blasting

- SP said Hanson are currently blasting on levels 5,6 and 7.
- SP went on to explain how vibration and air over pressure caused by blasting was monitored.
- SP showed a table of the readings Batts Combe have had since January 2023. He said Hanson's planning conditions mean they can operate to a maximum Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) of 9mm/s (millimetres per second). The lowest recorded in 2023 for Batts Combe was 0.79mm/s and the highest 2.725mm/s and well within the limit of the planning condition.

Quarry blasting

- Currently blasting on levels 5,6,7.
- Planning – Max 9mm/s PPV.

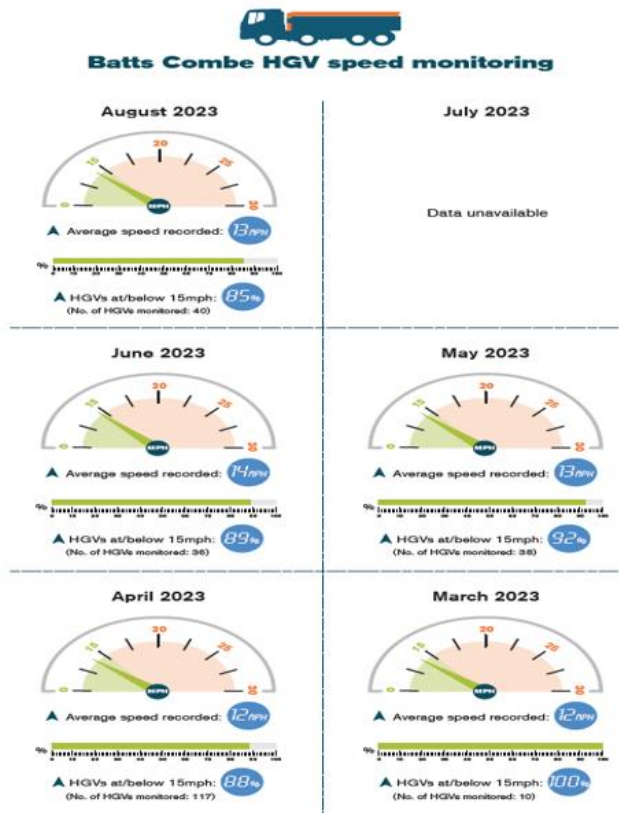
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Date	Shot No	PPV Recorder	Scaled Distance	Air Over Pressure	MIC	mic @0.5	Quarry Lev
18 January 2023	R0123	0.925	70.0	111	165	12.8	8
06 February 2023	R0223	1.25	50.9	109	154	12.4	4
03 March 2023	R0323	0.79	68.2	108	153	12.4	9
19 April 2023	R0423	1.175	73.9	110	134	11.6	9
28 April 2023	R0523	1.475	65.8	111	154	12.4	9
20 May 2023	R0623	2.05	55.7	114	145	12.0	5
09 June 2023	R0723	2.725	53.9	112	148	12.2	5
14 June 2023	R0823	2.075	47.1	111	176	13.3	6
06 July 2023	R0923	1.975	54.1	108	159	12.6	5
17 July 2023	R1023	2.425	50.5	108	160	12.6	5
25 July 2023	R1123	1.525	52.0	108	164	12.8	6
04 August 2023	R1223	2.35	71.9	110	135	11.6	9
17 August 2023	R1323	1.88	50.5	110	181	13.5	6
17 August 2023	R1323	1.375	132.3	108	181	13.5	6



- BA asked if there was monitoring outside of the quarry.
- SP said yes, in several places. Warrens Hill and elsewhere in the village.

Speed monitoring

- SP showed the group the speed monitoring graph.



- NH said in August for instance, the chart says 40 HGVs monitored, is that 40 in one day or 20 each over two days? How many days were they out monitoring?
- SP said MB would find out for the next meeting.

- NH asked if the speed monitoring could be done early in the morning, and maybe you could also advise where on Venns Gate the information is coming from?

Rebrand

- SP advised the group that on Monday 2nd October, Hanson UK will rebrand to Heidelberg Materials. The change is a part of a global initiative. With all operating territories becoming aligned with the parent company, which became Heidelberg Materials in September 2022. The aim is to become the first net zero company in our sector and we're making significant progress.
- SP said everything else stays the same, including our commitment to running our operations to the highest standards, and being a good neighbour.
- SP said the email address will change to @heidelbergmaterials.com but both email addresses will work for a while.

Community giving

- SP told the group of community actions since the last meeting. He said Hanson had sponsored the Cheddar Flower Show and Cheddar Valley Junior FC. Had 4 students from Kings of Wessex School for work experience. Organised volunteers to attend and supplied some remote-control dumpers to play with at Flan Jam Skate Jam, which was raising money for a local mental health charity.
- SP said in the next few weeks Hanson would be providing volunteers to help the Axe Valley Men's Shed move premises and help tidy the outside space. Also quarry visits have been arranged for Mendip Rocks and Axbridge First School.
- SP told the group he had recently had a Police support visit.

Cheddar Flower Show Sponsorship.

Cheddar Valley Junior FC Sponsorship

Work Experience for Kings of Wessex

Axe Valley Men's Shed Relocation

Flan Jam Skate Jam - [Axbridge 1st School](#)

Police support visit - Mendip Rocks



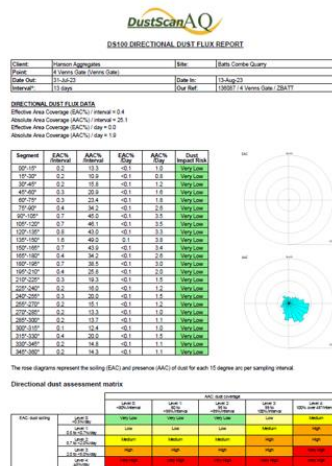
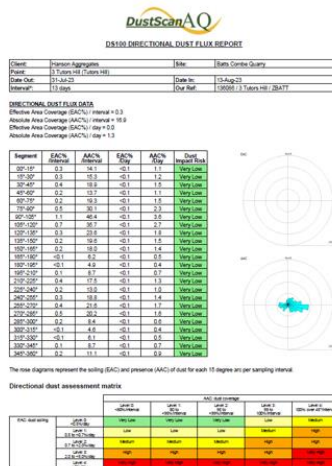
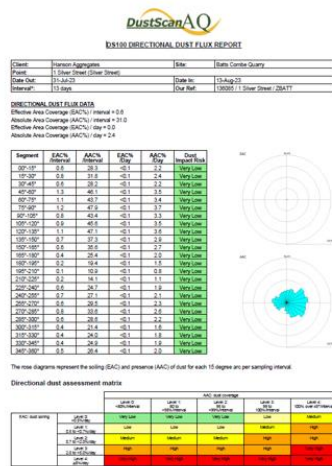
Complaints

- SP showed the group the complaint log that the site keeps. He highlighted an issue recently where during a busy period a collect haulier was spoken to by 3 women who were concerned about the level of traffic. The haulier did not have a CB and it resulted in him having to reverse back down Warrens Hill into Venns Gate. The reason for him having to reverse was because someone had deliberately blocked the highways owned passing bays with vehicles and traffic cones. While we understand from a witness that words were exchanged from both sides, the driver responded to one woman in a way we would not want, and we view as unacceptable. Hanson responded immediately by diverting the hauliers away to another quarry.
- SP told the group Batts Combe now have a monthly community communication meeting to discuss internally how to solve problems that arise.
- NH said in busy periods, could you not send a member of staff down to hold drivers back, but that then may cause an issue with them blocking Venns Gate?
- SP said the issue with that is, I don't have enough staff, and I don't know when it's going to happen.

Dust monitoring

- SP showed the group details of the dust monitoring. He said he is happy as the results we are getting are low and well within the limit of the planning conditions. He said the monitoring on site is working well and shuts the plant down at the first sign of an issue. We still get complaints, but the dust is coming from other sources for example the many building projects that are evident in Cheddar.

Dust Monitoring



3. Landscape & Biodiversity update

- AH had sent apologies and an update which SP presented to the group.
- SP said the APHA have now confirmed that the goats and sheep are of no ownership, and so landowners are now permitted to go ahead and cull them.
- SP said AH had arranged a thermal drone survey of Hanson's landholding over the winter period, to establish the populations of goats and sheep, and going forward will be able to manage the populations in a sustainable way. Hanson will continue to work with other landowners and stakeholders to ensure we are all aware of what each other is doing on our respective landholdings.
- SP said following on from the scrub clearance last winter, Hanson have been spraying the bramble and scrub regrowth on the Perch this week.

4. Land and Mineral Planning update

- BF covered in resident section.

5. Hanson Transport update

- SP covered this in the Hanson site update section.

6. Environmental Health update

- No attendance from Environment Agency.

7. District Council update

- BF said nothing to report.

8. Local Resident update

- NH asked if there was any news on the ROMP.
- BA said he'd not heard from Somerset Council (SC) about service of the periodic review notices. SC did a routine assessment in March 2023. He said he understood there was a department restructuring going on in Somerset Council planning.
- BA went on to explain the ROMP review process, he said once notice is served, Hanson then have 12 to 18 months to submit the scheme with updated plans and environmental impact assessment. Key considerations are likely to be traffic, noise, dust, and vibration.
- BA stated that the process of reviewing old planning permissions (ROMP reviews) by SCC isn't fundamentally to try to stop the quarry from operating before the current permitted extraction end date of 2042, but the review process is an opportunity to take account of new legislation and update existing conditions as required.
- NH said reference MP Connect, all Hanson drivers are inducted but have collect drivers now been put on, as it doesn't seem many are inducted.

- SP said all drivers that attend site are inducted, but not all on MP connect. All Hanson and franchise drivers are on MP Connect, collect drivers have a basic induction.
- NH asked to clarify then, that after a drivers first visit, they should all be inducted.
- SP confirmed that is correct.
- NH asked SP if he knew the ratio of collect drivers to Hanson drivers.
- SP said the bulk of what we do is collects. Some collect drivers subcontract for us so they will have MP Connect.
- SP said he gets a report of drivers who have not been inducted.
- NH said in terms of drivers who have been reported for speeding etc, is there any response?
- SP said the responses range from "I wasn't speeding" to apologies for going faster than Hanson request.
- NH said recently it stands out that the behaviour of the drivers is poor.
- SP said next week I am doing a ride along, which means I will go out with a haulier to a delivery. Hanson have requested all senior management also do this.
- NH asked when and where the speed sign was going to be relocated.
- SP asked NH where he would like to see it moved?
- NH said there are two locations he thinks it would be beneficial to move it to, on Venns Gate just as the road opens, and the first part of Warrens Hill. He added he would be happy to have it outside his house for a few weeks.
- NH said he has seen lots of new customer names and Hanson franchisee recently who all seem to be in a rush.
- SP said over the next few weeks we'll have a push on speed monitoring especially at busy periods.
- NH said early morning would be a good time to do it as the drivers seem to be a lot faster. They seem to think they have a bit more freedom.

9. Parish Council update

- MT said there was nothing from Axbridge but did ask if anything was found in the rock when blasting, like fossils.
- SP said nothing significant, lots of interesting rock, caves, stalagmites, and stalactites. There is a group called Mendip Rocks that is organised by "the Earth Science Centre near Frome" - who visited last year and are visiting again this year. Last year they found several fossils.

- BA said to put the details of Mendips Rocks in the minutes in case anyone wanted to book onto one of its future tours.
- www.earthsciencecentre.org.uk/mendip-rocks

10. **AOBs**

- BA asked the group if they thought quarterly meetings were still beneficial or could they possible be reduced to two or three meetings in any 12-month period. Suggest the group think about it and discuss at the next meeting.
- BA & SP very happy to keep with quarterly meetings if the wider group is happy for that to remain.
- BF said if there was nothing else, the meeting will close.

Summary of Actions

- MMB to upload approved minutes from December's meeting to the Batts Combe web page.
- BA to submit plans for pathway in Venns Gate.
- BA to confirm who will be responsible for the footpath.
- SP to speak to sweepers about speed.
- SP to chase convex mirror for AC.
- SP to increase speed monitoring in busy periods and early in the morning.
- SP to move speed sign.
- MMB to get more detail on speed monitoring. E.g., How many occasion was speed monitoring done to get the overall number of lorries checked?

Proposed dates for next 4 meetings

Thursday 7th December 2023
Thursday 7th March 2024
Thursday 6th June 2024
Thursday 12th September 2024

[ENDS]